

*Alfred Bodin*

Alfred Bodin Fine Arts - Painting File

*Verelst*

*1991-2005*

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES	
LOCATOR	5109
BOX	19
FILE	20



oil/wood 36 1/2 x 27 1/2 "

DEER NEST



PIPER VEREUST

**Smith**

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U.S.A.



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

Liebe, lieber geachteter Herr Professor Demowski  
Wie Sie sich wieder denken können,  
sprechen Isabel und ich oft über Ihre Mutter,  
und hoffen, dass alles gut verläuft.

Beiliegende drei Photographien

- (1) Dr. Paul. Meine Ansicht noch sicher ein Liebes  
Führwerk. Das Bild ist sehr schmutzig, und gut  
erhalten. Späterstens April hoffe ich Ihnen  
ein Abbildchen senden zu können (nach Reinigung).
- (2) Bibellesende Frau. Etwas hölzern, gut erhalten.  
Fahren meist braun. Eine Landbaudarstellung,  
aber welche? Irgend wo habe ich dieses  
Bild oder ein sehr ähnliches schon gesehen,  
aber wo? Öl/Holz,  $36\frac{1}{2} \times 27\frac{1}{2}$  inches.
- (3) Eine kleine, hübsche Austerabteilung, Öl  
auf Holz,  $17 \times 10\frac{3}{4}$  inches, Sammlung  
Sir John Savile, Rufford Abbey, 1888, No. 38.  
Stimmt die Zuschreibung an Jakob de Woe?

Beiliegend auch Kopie eines Briefes  
von Dr. Kiermann über meine Liebes-Bilder.  
Wie Christopher Brown in London (der das  
Bild im Original kennt), glaubt auch er dass  
mein Fragment der Verdingung im Tempel ein  
Führwerk ist.

Inzwischen ist auch Band II Ihres Hauptwerkes,  
das der Verlag gütlich nach Milwaukee sandte,  
gut angekommen. Besten Dank.

Das einzige R.-Schulwerk von dem ich weiss,  
dass es bald zur Auktion kommt, ist das  
riesengroße Tobiasbild aus Springfield, von Peter  
Verelst, von Ihnen abgekauft. Bei der Größe  
ist die Qualität ungenügend.

Herzliche Grüsse, auch an Ihre  
liebe Mutter, von Isahel & mir.

Ihre sehr

Georg Dreyer

11. II. 85.



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

15. III. 85.

Liebe Frau Dr. Beut:

Verzeihen Sie bitte, dass etliche Geschäftsreiser meine Antwort auf Ihren letzten Brief verzögert hat, und schon ist es März, und wir freuen uns auf den Besuch im Juni.

Es tut mir leid, dass Ihnen der Konvaleszenz-Katalog meiner Sammlung etwas Kummer bereitet hat. Ich hatte gefürchtet, dass die Teilung der Beschreibung der Bilder von der Literatur zum Übernehmen der letzteren führen kann - und so ist es auch, und nicht nur von Ihnen, sondern von vielen. Dass der Verhalt in der Beut'schen Bibel unter No. 1358 steht, ist auf Seite 83 'versteckt'. Der Katalog wurde nicht von mir, sondern von Prof. McTavish geschrieben - ein sehr tüchtiger, lieber Kunsthistoriker, Spezialist in italienischen Bildern des 16. Jahrhunderts. Ich gab ihm alle meine Literatur - aber nicht meine Gedanken. Wieviel ich Ihnen und Ihrem Mann zu danken habe - und nicht nur beim Sweet's - lässt sich nicht in Formaten

niederlegen.

Mr. haben Rätzebilder immer mehr Freude bereitet als die gesicherten Werke. Ihr Lieblings la meine Sammlung ist auf dem Umpschlag des Katalogs. Prof. Pumaroski wird es demnächst als Johann Ulrich Meier veröffentlichten - was ich nicht glauben kann.

Manchmal eben kaufe ich Bilder selbst wenn sie piquant sind - weil sie mir eben so gut gefallen. So war es mit Herrn Grossmann's Ruisdael (auch hier steht nicht im Katalog dass ich es dem Berntz verdanke) und einer R Winterlandschaft (links unten voll piquant) die wir gerade bei Christie's in London kauften. Photo liegt bei. Wissen Sie vielleicht ob dies mit H de R 988 identisch ist? Gibt es einen Katalog der Sammlung Max Steinkal's?

Auch lege ich Photographien einiger anderer Neuerwerbungen bei:

Eine alte Bibel lesende Frau. Früher Meier zugeschrieben, warum weis ich nicht. Etwas hölzern - ich denke an Pieter Verelst.

Eine kleine Anbetung der Hirten. Mein zweites <sup>Jakob</sup> Wilton de Wet.

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

-3-

Dem Paulus, der uns sehr gut gefäeset.  
Von Valentiner in 'Wiedergefundene Gemälde'  
als Rebusand veröffentlicht, aber der  
'Rebusand' (sic) Piquatur ging schnell weg.  
Hauptschneider schreibt, dass es nicht Liebes  
ist, aber ich glaube doch, dass es zu den  
anderen Apostelbildern der jungen Liebes  
(in Bamberg) passt. Die Deutschen wollen  
Sicherheit bei Zuschreibungen haben - uns  
ist Qualität lieber.

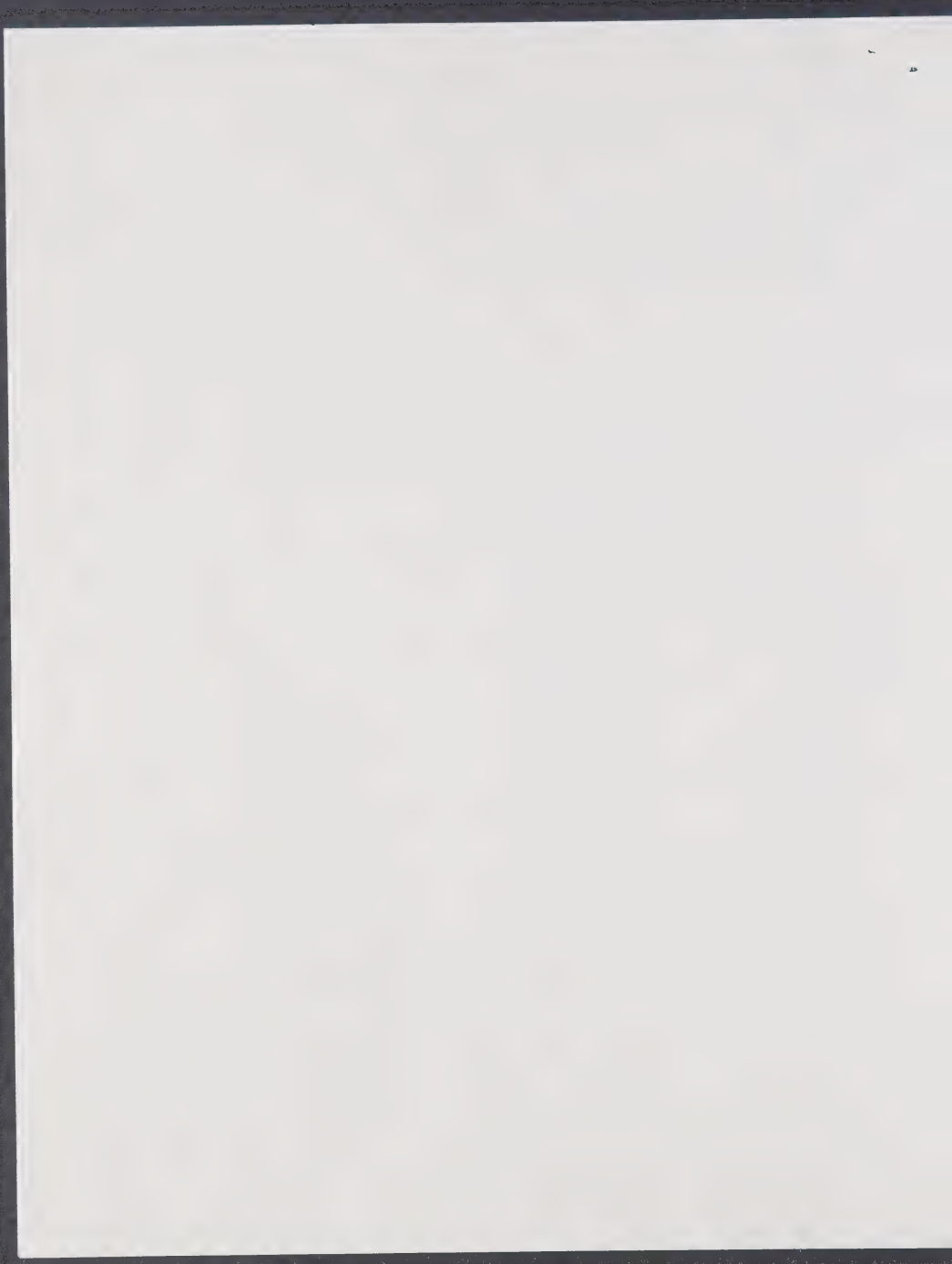
Offentliche werden wir im Juni mehr als um  
zwei Stunden für Ratselbilder haben. Vielleicht  
ein Konzert am Abend und ein paar Stunden  
in der alten Pinakothek? Paris sehen.  
eine der Pountage Mitte Juni?

Allenherzliche Grüsse von uns Beiden,

Ihre alten,

Alf. & Dora.

I am ashamed not to write to you in German,



INVOICE: 13 July 2003

INV# 200117

Joel and Paula Friedland  
9999 Collins Avenue  
Bal Harbour Towers, Apt 19-B  
Bal Harbour, FL 33154

For your purchase of the following painting:

**SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST** (The Hague 1644 - 1721 London)

*Fruit on a stone Table*

signed and dated bottom right in beige: *Si. VereIst Fa 1672*  
oil on canvas  
21 1/2 x 17 1/4 inches (54 1/2 x 44 cm.)

**TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$150,000**

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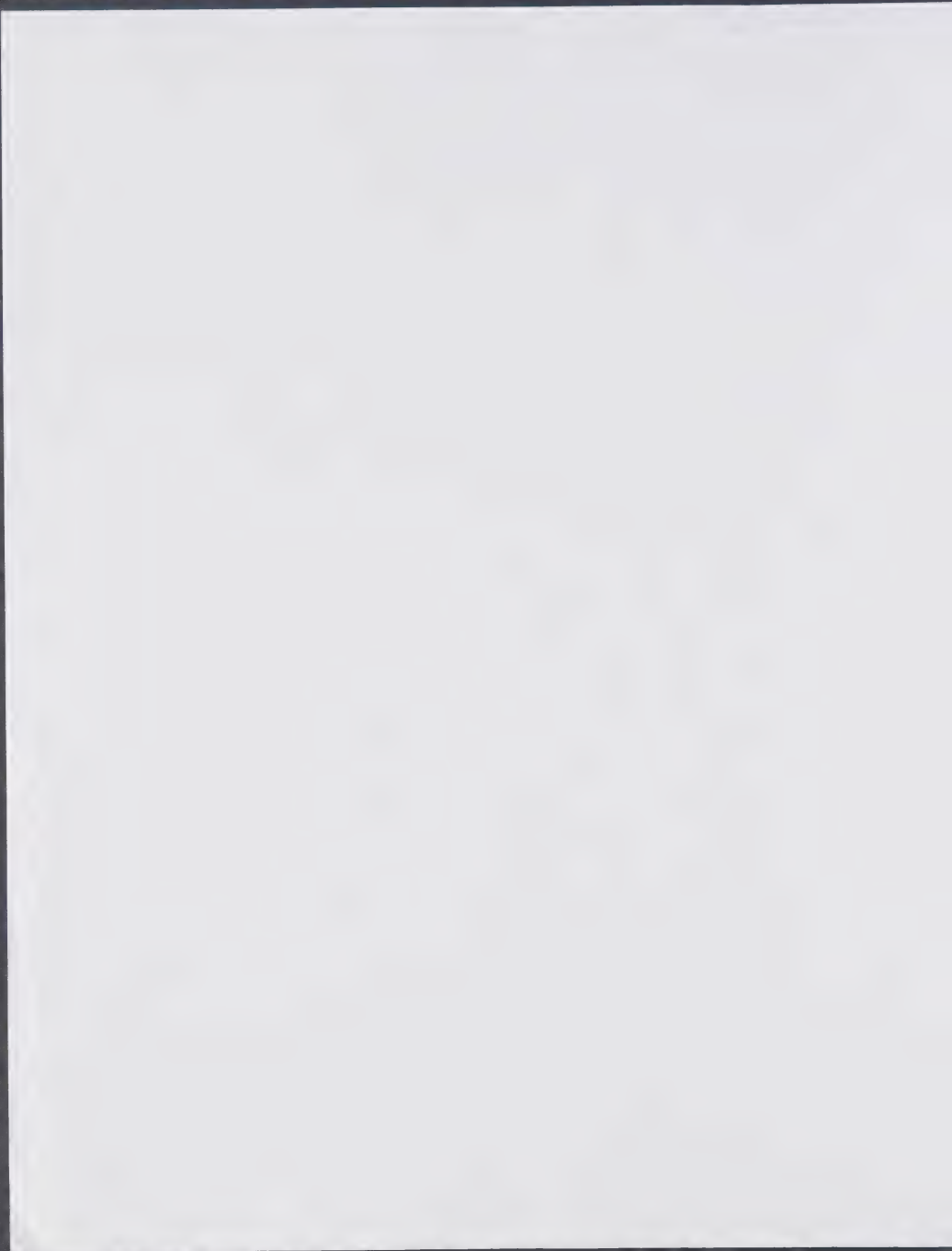
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The title passes automatically upon receipt of full and valid payment. I hereby guarantee the authenticity the above-described work of art against its full purchase price.

Sincerely yours,

Otto Naumann

RECEIVED  
7/27/03



Simon Pietersz Verelst (The Hague 1644 - London around 1710)

A pendant pair of paintings:

*An Opium Poppy and other Flowers in a Glass Vase and Fruit on a stone Table*, oil on canvas, 54.5 x 44 cm, signed at bottom right: *S. Verelst Fecit*

*Fruit on a Stone Table*, oil on canvas, 54.5 x 44 cm, signed and dated lower right: *Si. Verelst F a 1672*

Provenance:

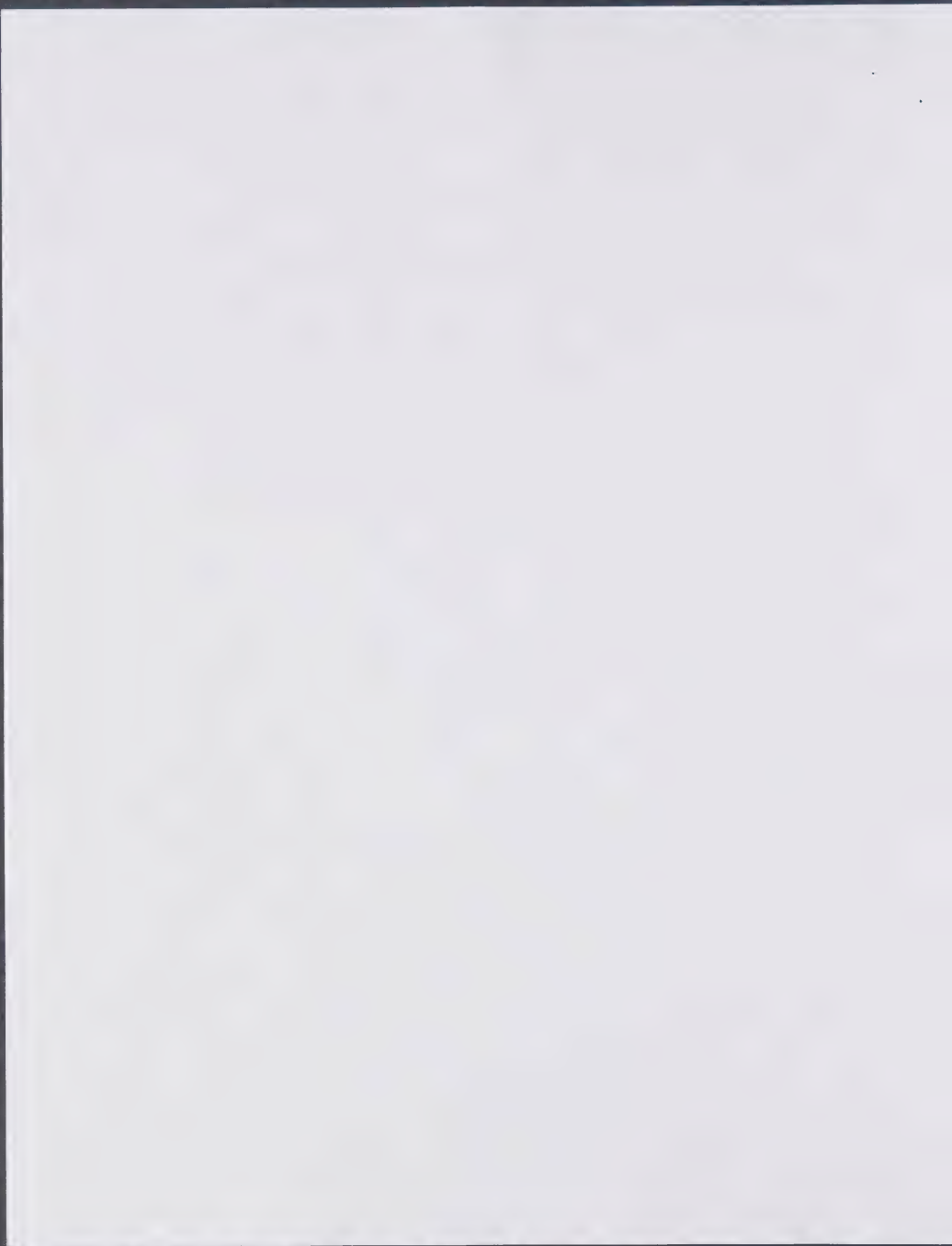
United States, private collection; New York, with Otto Naumann Fine Arts; purchased by Alfred Bader in 1995 (flower piece) and 2003 (fruit piece), for Isabel Bader; Milwaukee, collection of Isabel Bader

Literature:

Walter Liedtke, "Pepys and the Pictorial Arts," *Apollo* 138, no. 350, April 1991, pp. 230-231 (ill.); Willigen and Meijer 2003, p. 204 (fruit piece only)

Exhibitions:

Osaka, Tokyo, and Sydney 1990, pp. 106-107, 224-225, nos. 56, 57 (ill.); Naumann 1995, pp. 122-126, no. 27 (colour ill.)

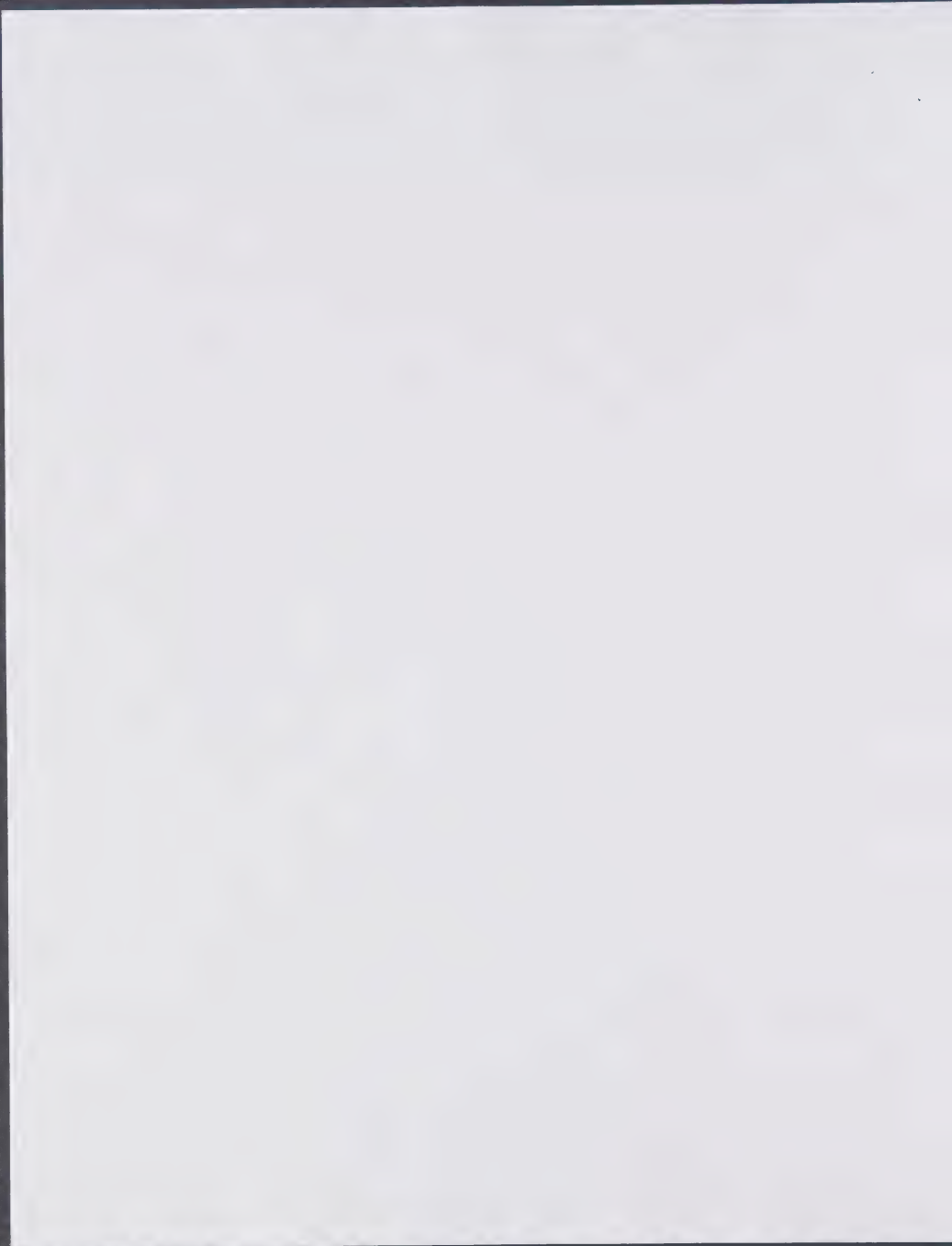




Copies:

1. Fruit piece: Oil on canvas, 52 x 41.5 cm, sale, London (Sotheby's), 26 October 1988, lot 116
2. Flower piece: oil on canvas, 54.5 x 43.2 cm, sale, London (Christie's), 29 June 1979, lot 33 (ill.); Amsterdam, with Waterman, in 1980

Simon Pietersz Verelst was one of two sons of the genre and portrait painter Pieter Hermansz. Verelst (around 1618 – around 1678) who took up the brush, likely training with him initially.<sup>1</sup> Simon took up the specialty of flower painting, and joined the painter's Confraternity in The Hague, *Pictura*, in 1663, while living nearby in Voorburg.<sup>2</sup> He appears to have chosen the work of Willem van Aelst (1627 – around 1683) as a model,<sup>3</sup> in particular his diagonal organization of elements, which he developed into a serpentine line. In 1668 or 1669, he left The Netherlands for London, where his recent arrival was recorded by Samuel Pepys in his diary entry for 11 April 1669.<sup>4</sup> Walpole reported him in Paris in 1680.<sup>5</sup> Verelst was widely celebrated for the extraordinary refinement and the evocation of reality in his paintings, but also for his extraordinary vanity, which led him to crown himself "The King of Painters," and to seek an audience with Charles II on familiar terms.<sup>6</sup> He was immortalized by several poets, including Matthew Prior (1664-1721);<sup>7</sup> and Jacob Campo Weyerman (1677-1747) reported on his activity in 1710,<sup>8</sup> however he was given as deceased when George Vertue (1684-1756) commented on him in 1717.<sup>9</sup>

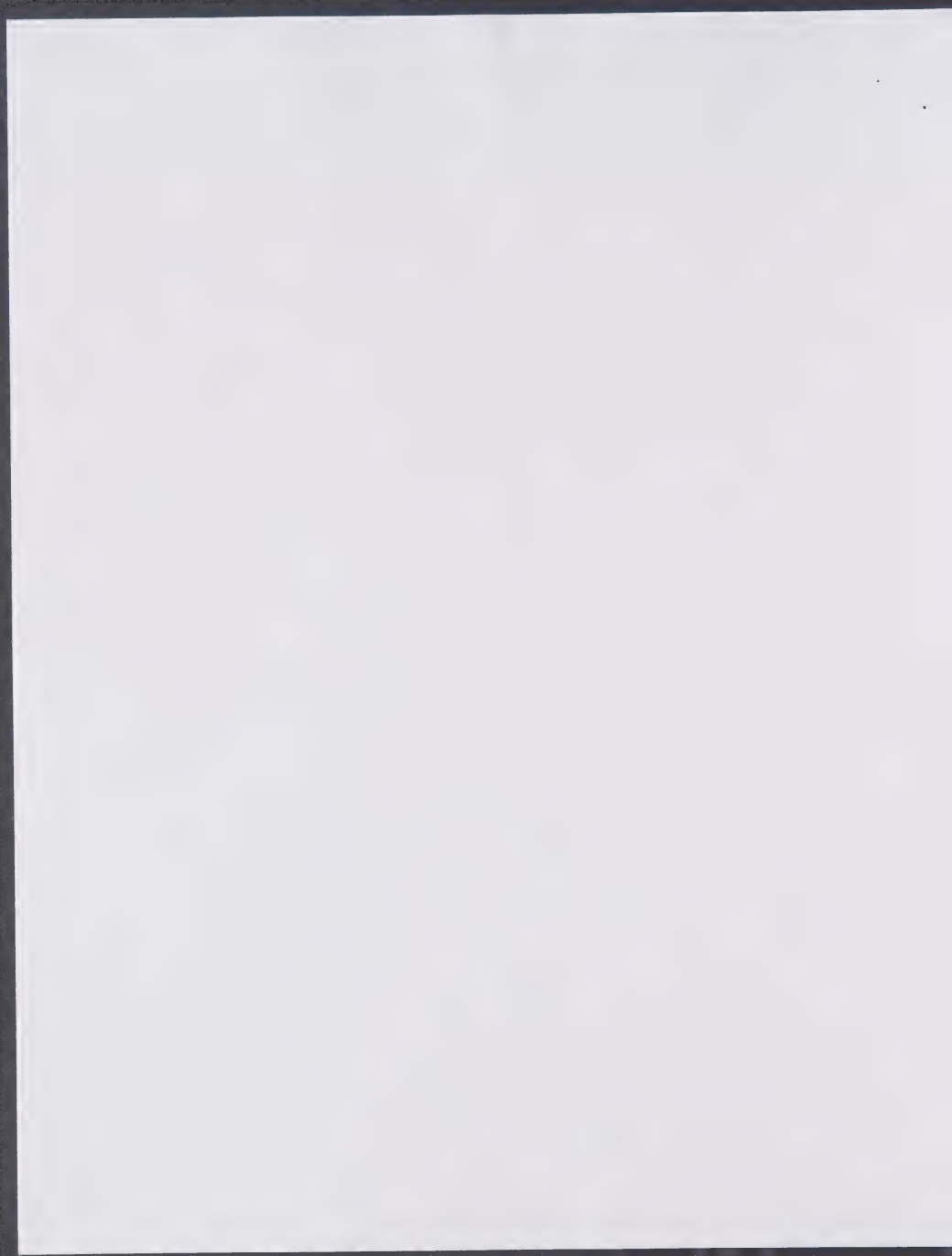


With corresponding dimensions and provenance, and handling, these two paintings form a pendant pair. Both can be dated to 1672, the year indicated on the still life with fruit, the painting that likely was meant to hang on the right. The flower piece shows the familiar S-curve arrangement that Verelst had developed before his arrival in England, and maintained for the rest of his career.

Characteristic of the highly developed genre of flower painting in The Netherlands in the 17th century, Verelst meticulously renders the specific characteristics of known species of flowers, and the examples shown here have all been identified by Sam Segal: African Marigold (bottom centre), Whitish Pink Rose (bottom left), Peony (overhanging), Snowball (Centre), Tulip (left), German Flag (top left), Opium Poppy (top), Pot Marigold (top, behind), Rosa Mundi (bottom right), *Rosa Gallica* (on the table top).<sup>10</sup> Segal also identified the two butterflies: Blue (bottom left) and Red Admiral (bottom right).

Whereas the strong light accentuates the Snowball in the centre, the highlight of this painting is the brilliant, effervescent Poppy Flower above, brilliantly set off against the cool sensual forms of the blue iris to its left. In addition, the bulky forms of the flowers composing the main diagonal axis contrast with the isolated, illuminated rose on a delicate stalk in the lower right.

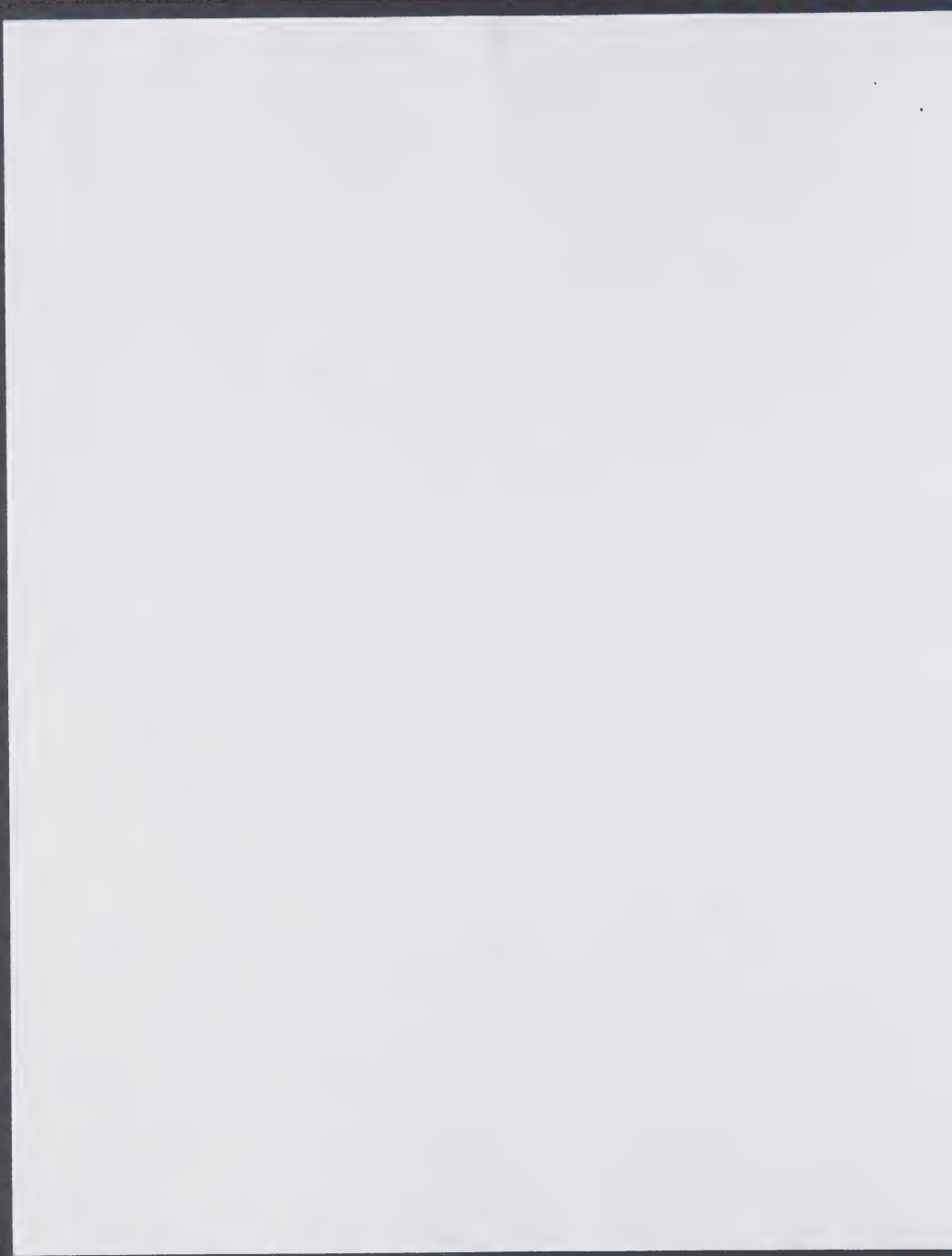
On a similar stone table, with its corner off to the right, a selection of fruits is arranged in the right canvas. To the right of centre sits a red and yellow peach, still attached to a stalk, with two desiccated leaves hanging over the edge of the table. To its left, two halves of a split-open peach rest on a plain round pewter plate. In front of them is a stalk



of three cherries, one of which hangs over the table's edge. To the right of the whole peach, a bunch of white grapes hangs over the table's edge, with a bunch of red grapes behind them. The composition's center is occupied by a melon with brightly illuminated vine leaves rising above it. At the table's edge to the left are red and white currants. Further back, to the upper left, a blue pot emerges, holding more white grapes, and two ripe tomatoes. Verelst includes three butterflies, one, a Painted Lady, on the peach leaf at bottom, and a White on the vine leaves in the center.<sup>11</sup> A third, a Blue, flies off above. Although the composition features the same S-curve as seen in the flower piece, Verelst has placed the tabletop higher, and allowed some light to fall on the background.

Verelst's technique, based on that of Willem van Aelst, employed underpainting and a buildup of layers of colour in varnish, rather than oil; this binder accounts for the poor condition of many of his works.<sup>12</sup> The present two canvases are by contrast remarkably well preserved.

1. See: Sam Segal, in: exhibition catalogue Naumann 1995, p. 122.
2. See: Obreen Archief, vol. 5, p. 156.
3. See: Sam Segal, in: exhibition catalogue Naumann 1995, p. 122.
4. See: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, eds. Robert Latham and William Matthews, London, 1970-1983, vol. 9, pp. 514-515, pertaining to: 11 April 1661.
5. Vertue II, p. 80.
6. On Verelst's vanity, see George Vertue, in: Vertue I, pp. 32, 35.



7. For Matthew Prior's poem, see: Frank Lewis, *Simon Pietersz Verelst*, Leigh-on-Sea,

1979, p. 17.

8. Weyerman, vol. 3, p. 248.

9. Vertue I, p. 42 (1717).

10. Sam Segal, in: exhibition catalogue Naumann 1995, p. 124.

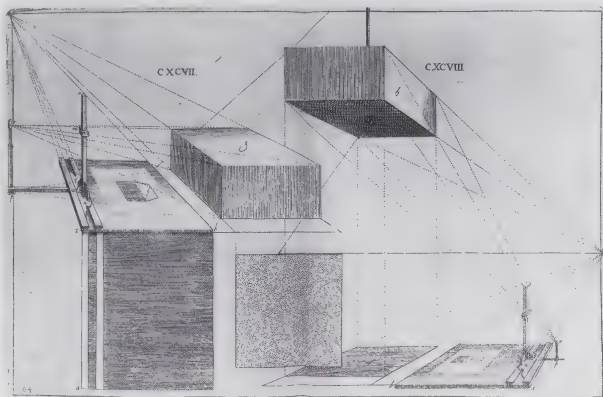
11. *Ibidem*.

12. *Ibidem*.









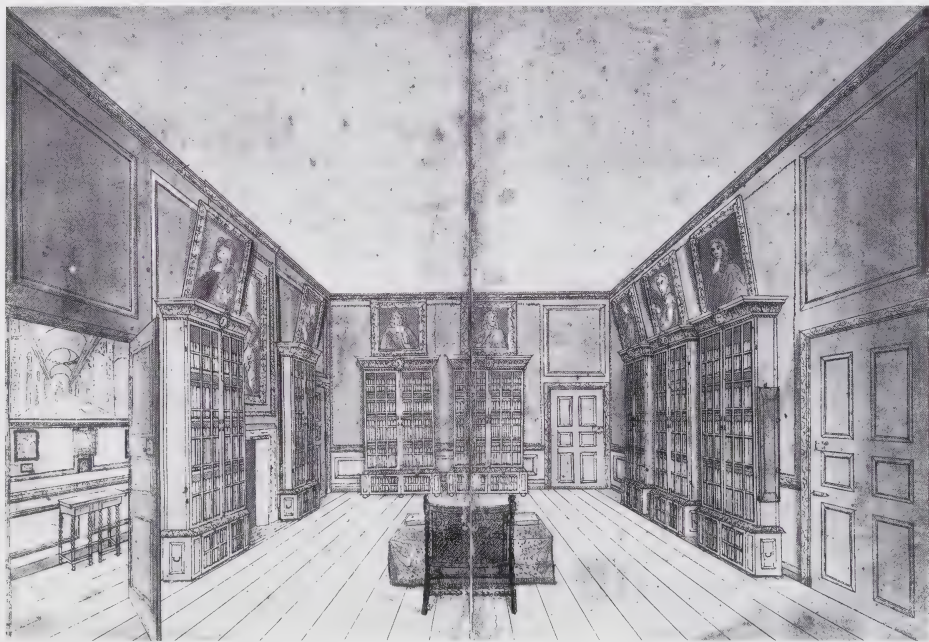
cathedral resembling St Peter's in Rome. Perspective and architecture were certainly the main points of appeal for Pepys and for the probably Dutch painter of this large church interior.<sup>12</sup>

In the two known drawings of Pepys's impressive library we see his celebrated bookcases (the first pair made in 1666),<sup>13</sup> a map of Paris, a fine mirror,

5 Plate 64 (figures CXC VII and CXC VIII) of *Perspectiva*, by Samuel Marolois, Amsterdam, 1628. Here the 'Squares' or perpendicular strings stretched in a frame are replaced by a moveable post and marker (*m*)

6 Pepys's library in York Buildings, London, an anonymous drawing in the library's catalogue, about 1693. The bookcases date from 1666 and later. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge)

and eight contemporary portraits of men. Elsewhere in the house was Hayls's portrait of Pepys's wife (Fig. 3), which, as noted above, pleased Pepys when he saw it in progress (19 February 1666), but did not when it was done, being a bad likeness, 'making no show' and 'no good painting' (23 May 1666). Portraits that did win Pepys's praise include a Van Dyck of Henrietta Maria 'when she was young' (13 September 1665, at Sir W. Hicke's house, which was otherwise 'ill furnished and miserably looked after'); a 'picture of the King of France's head, of Nanteuil's' (16 February 1669); and portrait miniatures by Samuel Cooper, 'though I must confess I do think the colouring of the flesh to be a little forced, yet the painting is so extraordinary, as I do never expect to see the like again' (30 March 1668). A few months later Elizabeth Pepys sat to Cooper on several days (8 to 18 July 1668); her portrait 'will be a noble picture, but yet I think not so like as Hales's is'.<sup>14</sup> The same criticism was applied to Sir Peter Lely when Pepys saw the so-called 'Windsor Beauties' that had been painted for the Duchess of York (21 August 1668): a 'room of pictures of some Maids of



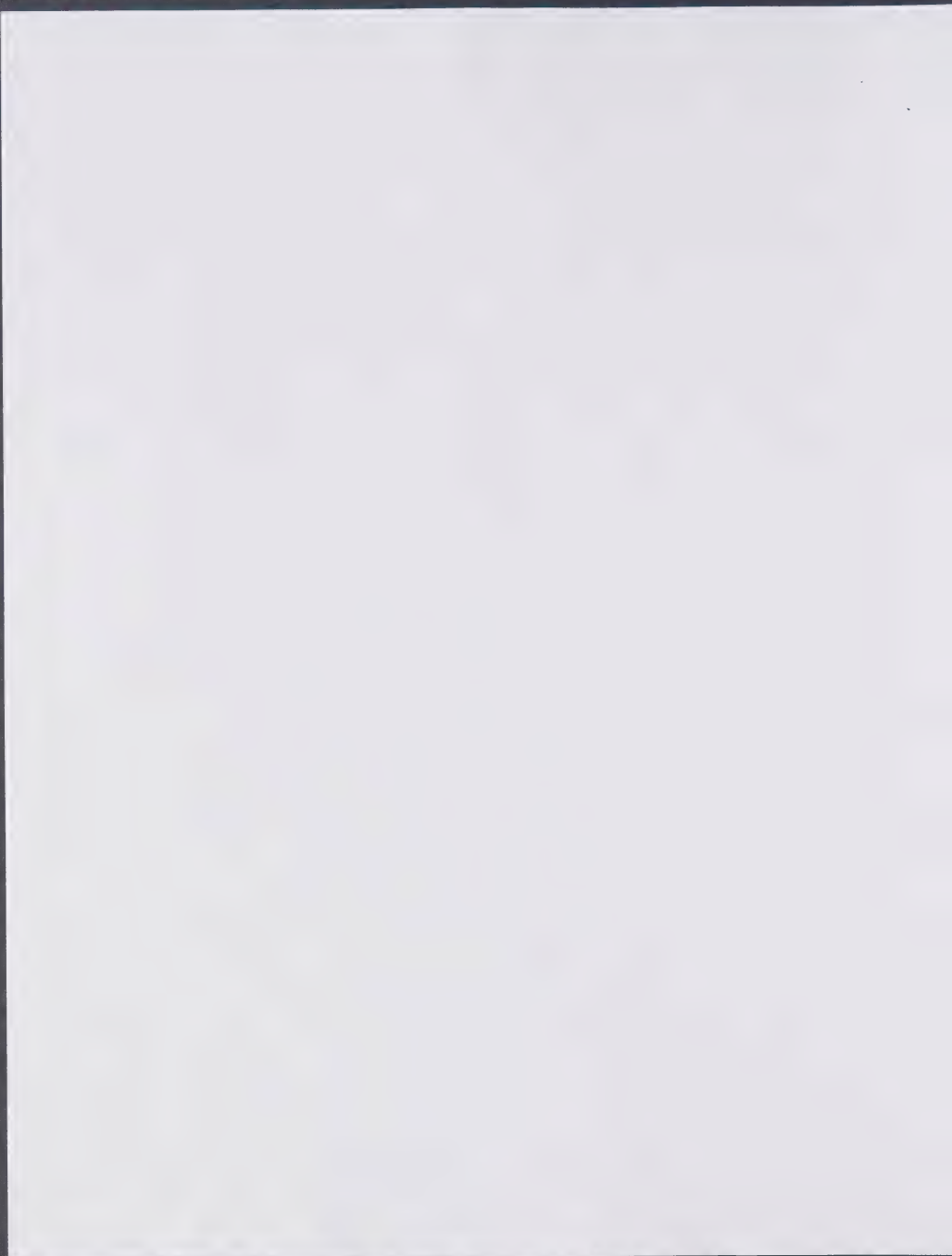
## The Artist (1644-1721)



ALMOST A DECADE had passed since the Restoration of His Majesty King Charles II. Never had the Court been gayer. Charles II, resolute only in the quest of pleasure, wary lest he should make the political mistakes of his father, tripped lightly through the years, surrounding himself with beautiful women and witty men. The Theatre was drawing the town to see the new Restoration plays which, if they reflected the irresponsible morals of the time, were a great relief from the real-life tragedies that had afflicted England and Scotland during the first half of that disturbed century. The art of painting was proceeding mostly after Flemish and Dutch inspiration, with Peter Lely carrying on the Van Dyck tradition, and filling palaces and

mansions with elegant portraits. Foreign artists were welcomed to London; and a Dutchman who was to find England a happy hunting ground was Simon Pietersz Verelst. Pictorially there are six of this name and family recorded, of whom three, Herman, Cornelius and Simon Pietersz were painters of flowers. Of this trio Herman (c. 1640-c. 1700) was the senior; Simon, the younger brother to Herman; the next, Cornelius (1667-1734), son of Herman, the youngest. All three came to London in the reign of Charles II, (as did also Maria, a daughter of Herman, and a portrait and historical painter); all obtained here excellent and well-deserved patronage from the greatest in the land. Of these, Simon Pietersz, if not the best painter (for there is little to choose between him and Herman, whilst Cornelius ran close to both) is the best known; this largely by the accident of considerable anecdotal mention by those twin conferrers of immortality, Horace Walpole and Samuel Pepys. He is indeed one of the few of his craft of whom we know more than their works. And what we learn of Simon Verelst is peculiar enough. He painted flower pieces so marvellously detailed and exquisite in colour as to win immediate patronage from the King, nobility and gentry. Had we been in St James's Market on April 11th, 1669, we might have seen Samuel Pepys' ornate and lumbering coach drawing up outside the house of one Jan Looten, another Dutch artist prominent in London. Pepys had called to see some paintings by him. In his famous Diary under that date, Pepys writes: 'By accident he [Jan Looten] directed us to a painter that was newly come over, one Everest (*sic*), who took us to his lodging nearby, and did show us a little flowerpot of his drawing, the drops of dew hanging on the leaves, so that I was forced again and again to put my finger to it to feel whether my eyes were deceived or no. He do ask £70 for it; I had the vanity to bid him £20. But a better picture I never saw in my whole life, and it is worth going twenty miles to see it'.

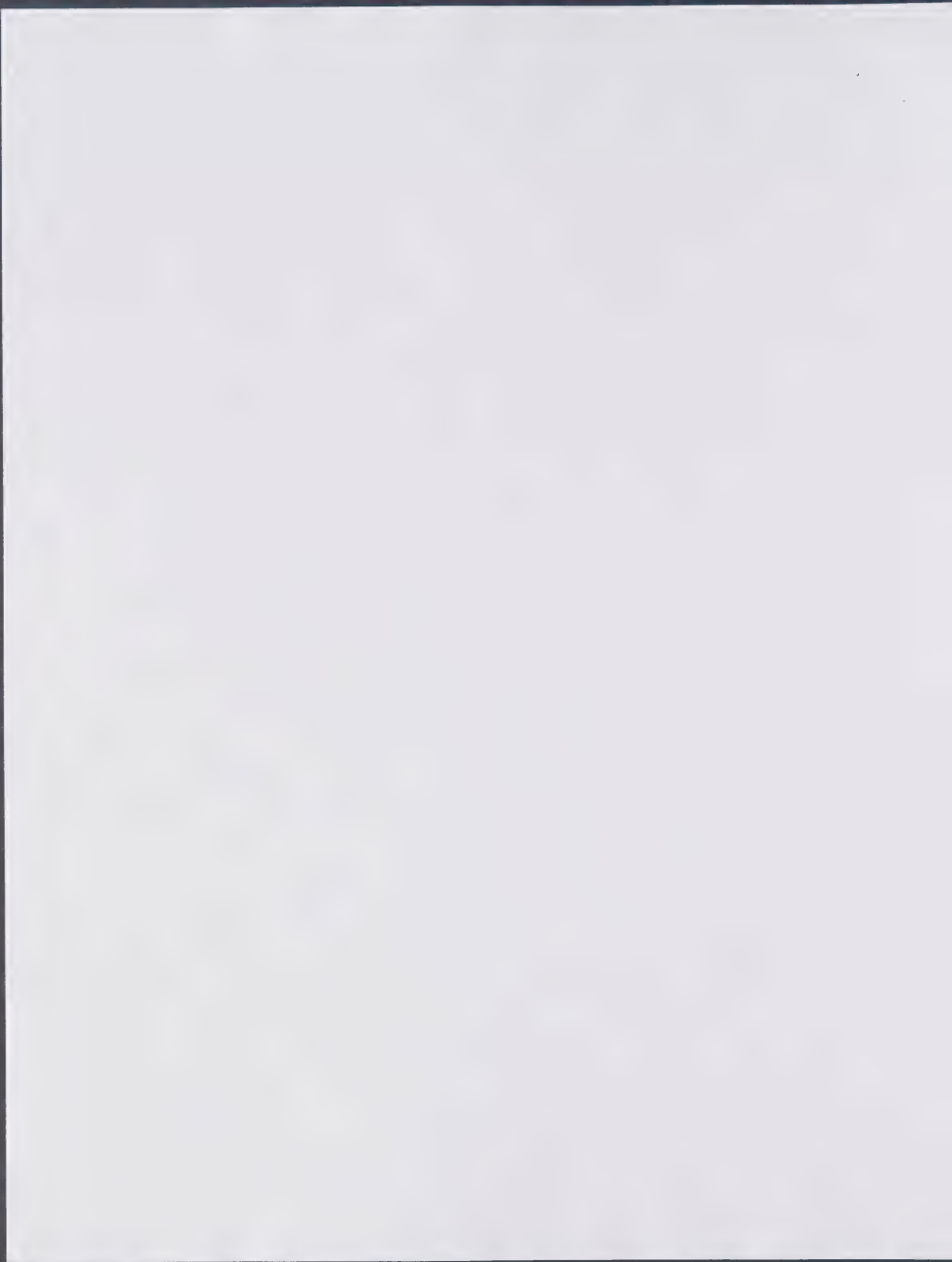
These are matters which throw much light on the merit, reputation and evaluation of



Simon Verelst; for Pepys was a first-rate judge of art, and the artist's prices must be multiplied many, many times at least to bring them into conformity with those of today. But there were never any contemporary doubts about his merits. The King himself bought six of his paintings, Lord Pomfret, the omniscient Payne Knight\* of his day, bought nine, and others followed suit according to their means. In painting, therefore, Simon Verelst was 'an amazing instance of a popular man'. Long after he had attained fame as a flower painter, he imagined himself as a portraitist in which he was decried as a fool and a bungler, though he was neither, and had sense enough at any rate to condone his folly by surrounding every effigy of a 'tenth transmitter of a foolish face' with such large and finely painted floral festoons that most people, King Charles included, mistook these performances for Flower-pieces *pur sang*. Nevertheless, his portraits were numerous and popular, the King commissioned several, and for a time Sir Peter Lely himself feared for his own patronage. For a half-length portrait he charged £110, the highest price ever paid in England up till that time. Among his patrons was the second Duke of Buckingham, notorious for duelling, amours and political intrigue, and author of a celebrated comedy, *The Rehearsal*. Though Buckingham admired Verelst's flower-pieces, he could not but perceive that the artist was fantastically vain, and deserved, as the saying goes, 'to be taken down a peg or two'. He therefore advised him to take up portrait painting, thinking that Verelst was untrained in this branch of art and would not make a success of it. The Duke was his first sitter in England, and the result as might be expected was a portrait so entwined with flowers and fruits as to be extraordinary. When shewn to the King and Court everybody laughed. As always with conceited and insensitive men, Verelst was not in the least perturbed but went on his way painting portraits all but submerged by floral accessories and fruity backgrounds. Horace Walpole notices the sequel in his *Anecdotes of Painting in England*: 'However, as it sometimes happens to wiser buffoons than Verelst, he was laughed at till he was admired and Sir Peter Lely became the real sacrifice to the jest.. He lost much of his business and retired to Kew, whilst Verelst engrossed the fashion.' Perhaps Walpole exaggerates somewhat here since Lely would appear to have been fully occupied during his years in England. He was nominated Court Painter and knighted by Charles II in 1679. Like Titian he had a brush in his hand till the last. While engaged on a portrait of the young Duchess of Somerset, Lely had a stroke from which he never recovered and died comparatively soon afterwards.

Further evidence of Verelst's vanity is found in a record of the scene between the artist and the Earl of Shaftesbury. The Earl, a great figure in social and political life, had lately been made Lord Chancellor. Opinion is divided as to his merits and character. He may have proved as some contemporaries thought a 'most upright judge', but Charles II himself described Shaftesbury as 'the wickedest dog in England'. Perhaps it was Buck-

\* Acknowledged as the leading connoisseur of the late eighteenth century whose word was law in the realms of Art.

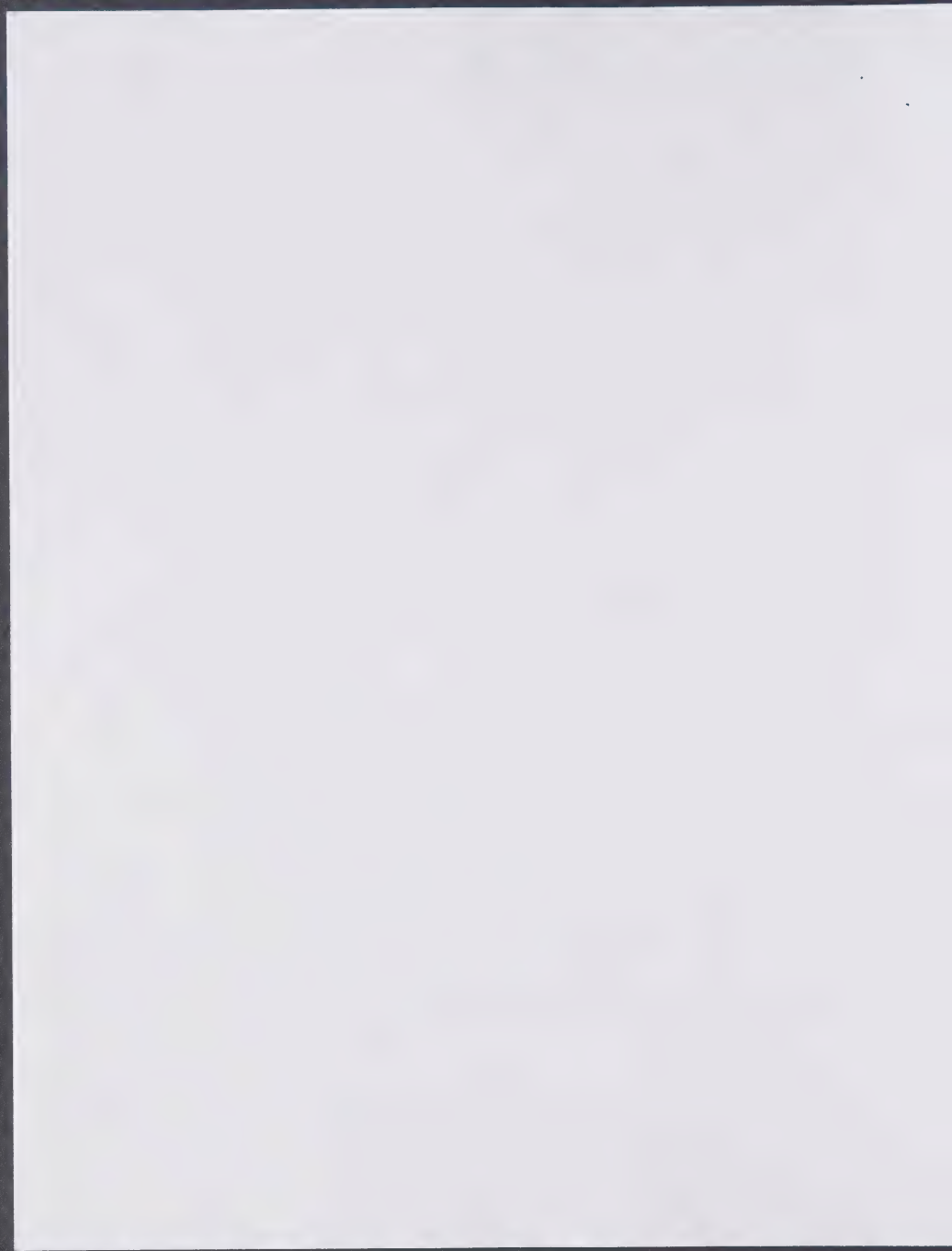


ingham, with whom Shaftesbury had been associated with in certain political sensations, who introduced him to Verelst. The Earl went to the artist's studio to sit for his portrait. Verelst in a mood of unpardonable vulgarity wore his hat in Shaftesbury's presence. 'Don't you know me?' said the peer. 'Yes', replied the painter 'You are my Lord Chancellor, and do you know me? I am Verelst, the King can make any man Chancellor, but he can make nobody a Verelst.' Shaftesbury was rightly indignant, turned his back on Verelst and commissioned Greenhill to paint him. The story is a variant of anecdotes about Henry VIII and Holbein, and Charles V and Titian; but in both these cases it is the King who flatters the artist, and not the artist who insults his patron. In spite of his arrogance, Verelst continued his successful career. Insatiable of praise, indifferent to criticism, he could take anything in the way of adulation. Among the poems by Matthew Prior (1664-1721) is the following flattering piece:

When famed Verelst this little  
wonder drew,  
Flora vouchsafed the growing work  
to view;  
Finding the painter's science at a  
stand  
The Goddess snatched the pencil  
from his hand;  
And finishing the piece she smiling  
said,  
Behold one work of mine that  
ne'er shall fade!

By such extravagant eulogy was Verelst's vanity encouraged. Nor can we wonder, in view of his eccentric mind, that he regarded himself above the rules of proper and reasonable conduct. He once announced that he was off to the King to talk with him for two or three hours. On being repulsed in his intention, the artist said: 'He is the King of England, and I am the King of Painting. Why should not we converse familiarly together?' Showing some admirers a work on which he had laboured on and off for twenty years, the artist boasted that it contained all the excellence of Raphael, Titian, Rubens and Van Dyck.

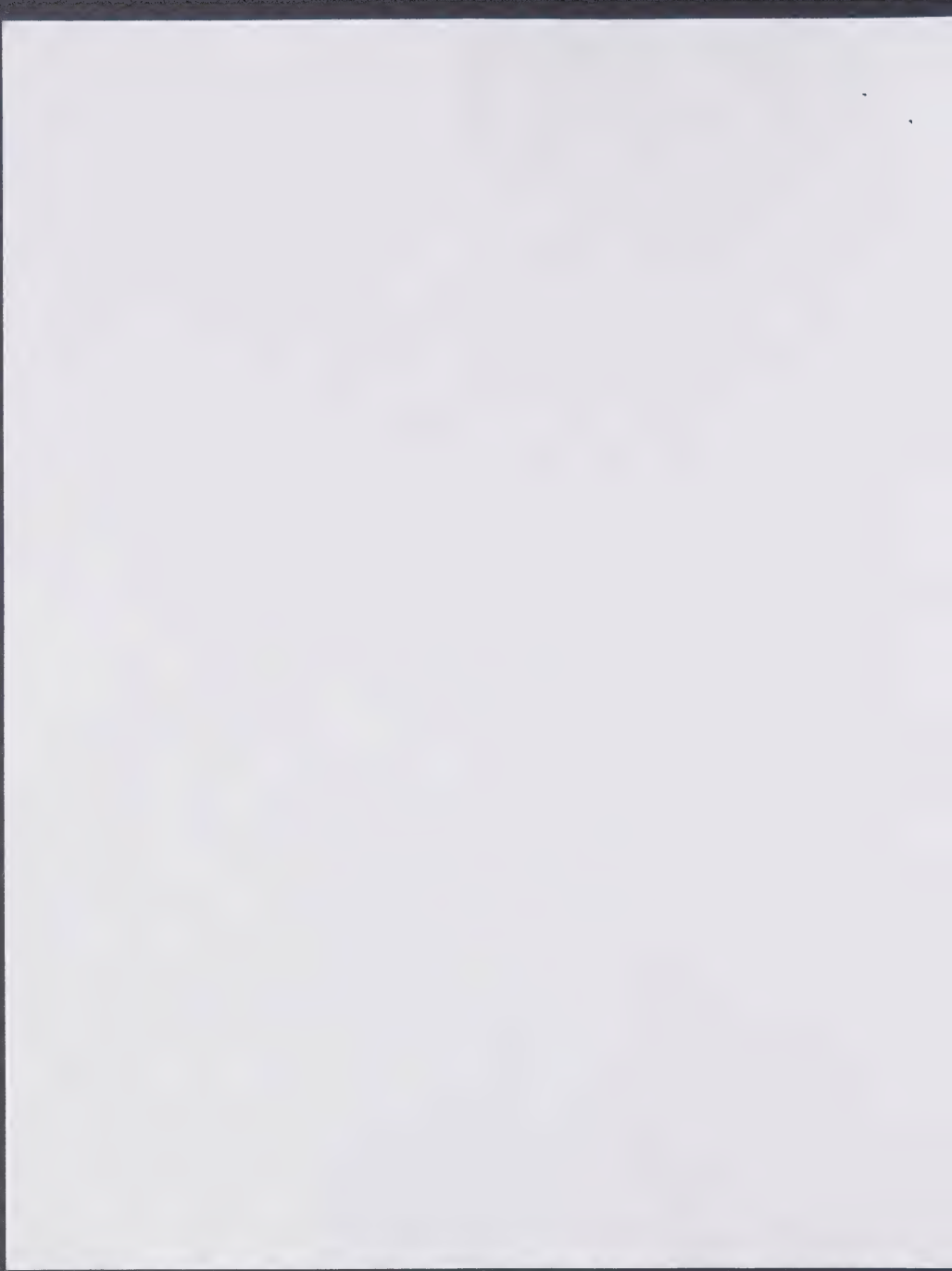
Towards the end of his life, Verelst became so mentally unbalanced that he had to be confined in an asylum. He recovered his reason sufficiently, however, to be set at liberty, but his talent as a painter had deserted him and he could no longer command clients and charge the high prices that he had been accustomed to receive. Though his position as an artist was eclipsed, Verelst was to figure before the public in another capacity, namely, as a witness in a society scandal. The gallantries of Mary Mordaunt, wife of Henry, 7th Duke of Norfolk, had long been common gossip. The Duke introduced a bill





for divorce into the House of Lords in 1691 and again in 1692. On both occasions it was rejected. Sir John Germain was generally regarded as the chief cause of the trouble between the Duke and Duchess. His Grace brought an action in November, 1692, in the Court of King's Bench against Germain and claimed £50,000 damages. To everybody's surprise the jury awarded the Duke only 100 marks in damages and costs. Verelst, who had painted the Duchess of Norfolk, was among the witnesses.

Simon Verelst died in Suffolk Street, Strand, London, in 1721.



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SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST (The Hague 1644 - 1721 London )

*An Opium Poppy and other Flowers in a glass Vase; and Fruit on a stone Table*

the first indistinctly signed at bottom right in black: *S. Verelst Fecit*; and the second signed and dated at bottom right in beige: *Si. Verelst F a 1672*

oil on canvas

21 1/2 x 17 1/4 inches (54 1/2 x 44 cm.)

A pair

**Provenance:**

Private Collection, United States

**Exhibition:**

Osaka, Nabio Museum of Art, Tokyo, Tokyo Station Gallery, and Sydney, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Flowers and Nature - Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries*, 1990, nos. 56 and 57, reproduced.

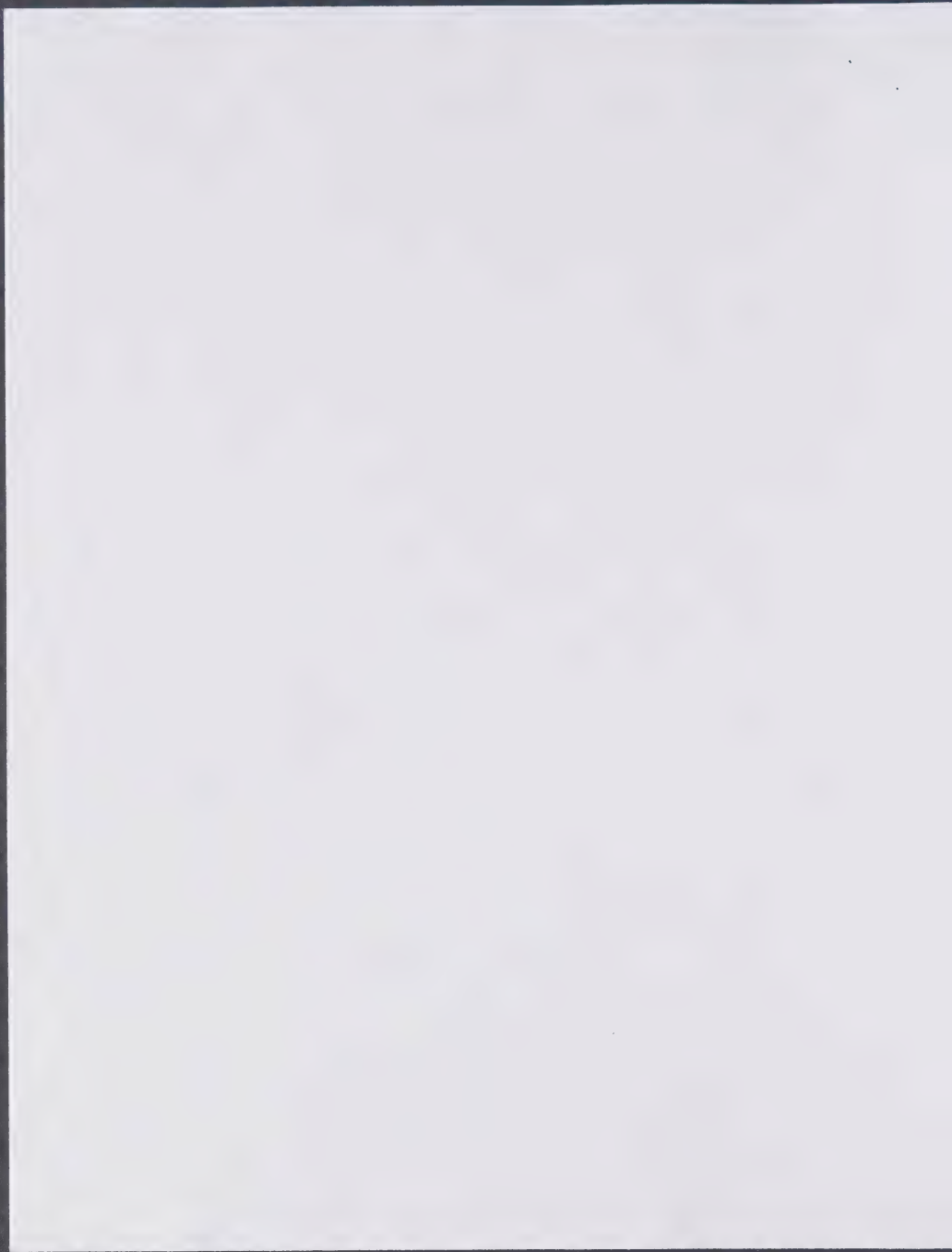
**Literature:**

Sam Segal, 1990, pp. 106-107, 224-225 (see exhibition)

Walter Liedtke, "Pepys and the Pictorial Arts - 'Great Plent of Good Pictures'," in *Apollo* 138/350, April, 1991, pp. 230-231, fig. II

Simon Pietersz. Verelst was born in 1644 in The Hague. His father, Pieter Harmensz. Verelst (1618-1668) was a portrait and genre painter who also produced a few still-lives. He probably taught his sons Herman (1641/2-1700) and Simon to paint. In 1663 they were registered in the *Confrérie Pictura* in The Hague, an artists' association. In 1668 or 1669 Simon, Herman and Herman's son Cornelis moved to London, where Pieter's flower pieces and portraits found great success. King Charles II bought six of Verelst's paintings, and his work was equally in demand among the nobility. It was not long before English poets were singing Simon's praises. His fame spread to Holland; in 1707 Gerard de Lairesse wrote that Verelst was the most celebrated flower painter of all time, ranking him above Daniel Seghers and Jan Davidsz. de Heem.<sup>1</sup> All this seems to have gone to Simon's head. He called himself "God of Flowers" and "King of Painting" and generally behaved in an arrogant fashion which eventually led to his incarceration in an asylum. Although he recovered his sanity, he failed to regain his earlier fame. He died in London in 1721.<sup>2</sup>

The flower piece is based on a characteristic compositional and color scheme in Simon Verelst's work: an S-shaped principal axis slanting up to the right with a striking flower or leaf at either end in white and pink, orange or red. These are the colors that usually provide the dominant tonality in his pictures, local underpainting providing the warm undertone. The pink tends to linger on in the autumnal hues of the rose-leaves, on which small, inflamed spots of light, highly detailed, can be observed. The casual arrangement of bent and curving stalks and the poppy's arched, curly foliage



are other constant factors in Verelst's work. Usually, a couple of butterflies appear, although we rarely see other insects or animals in the artist's florals. The total number of species in his *oeuvre* is limited. Close similarities do occur, but not without variation. His flowers possess the delicacy and semi-transparency of silk, like the rose, or are fluffier, like the peony. The foliage is an important decorative element in the composition; poppy or vine leaves often have a somewhat oleaginous look, in contrast to the dry, parchment-like leaves of the rose. There are pronounced *chiaroscuro* effects, the S-axis and especially the center being fully illuminated. Basically, flowers stand out against a dark background.

However, these characteristics are by no means always apparent, for relatively little of Verelst's work has survived intact. In many cases the leaves have turned a silvery-gray, and the flowers have deteriorated. Verelst worked with transparent layers of fast-drying colored varnishes which are liable to disappear when inexpertly cleaned. In emulation of Willem van Aelst, a thin glaze of yellow was painted over a thin layer of grayish-blue. Traces of the underlying silver-gray layer can often be seen on Verelst's leaves. Research recently undertaken while these two paintings were being cleaned confirmed the author's original theory about the layers of colored varnish.<sup>3</sup> It was also discovered that Verelst began his painting by first sketching a rough version in color on the canvas. Later he would work up the details, area by area.

The compositional schemes of both the flower and fruit piece derive in part from Willem van Aelst. In 1656 van Aelst painted a flower picture with a diagonal axis.<sup>4</sup> Later, the main axis acquired more elegant curvature. In a flower painting of 1663 in the Mauritshuis, The Hague<sup>5</sup> we can observe some key elements that Verelst was to exploit only a decade later.

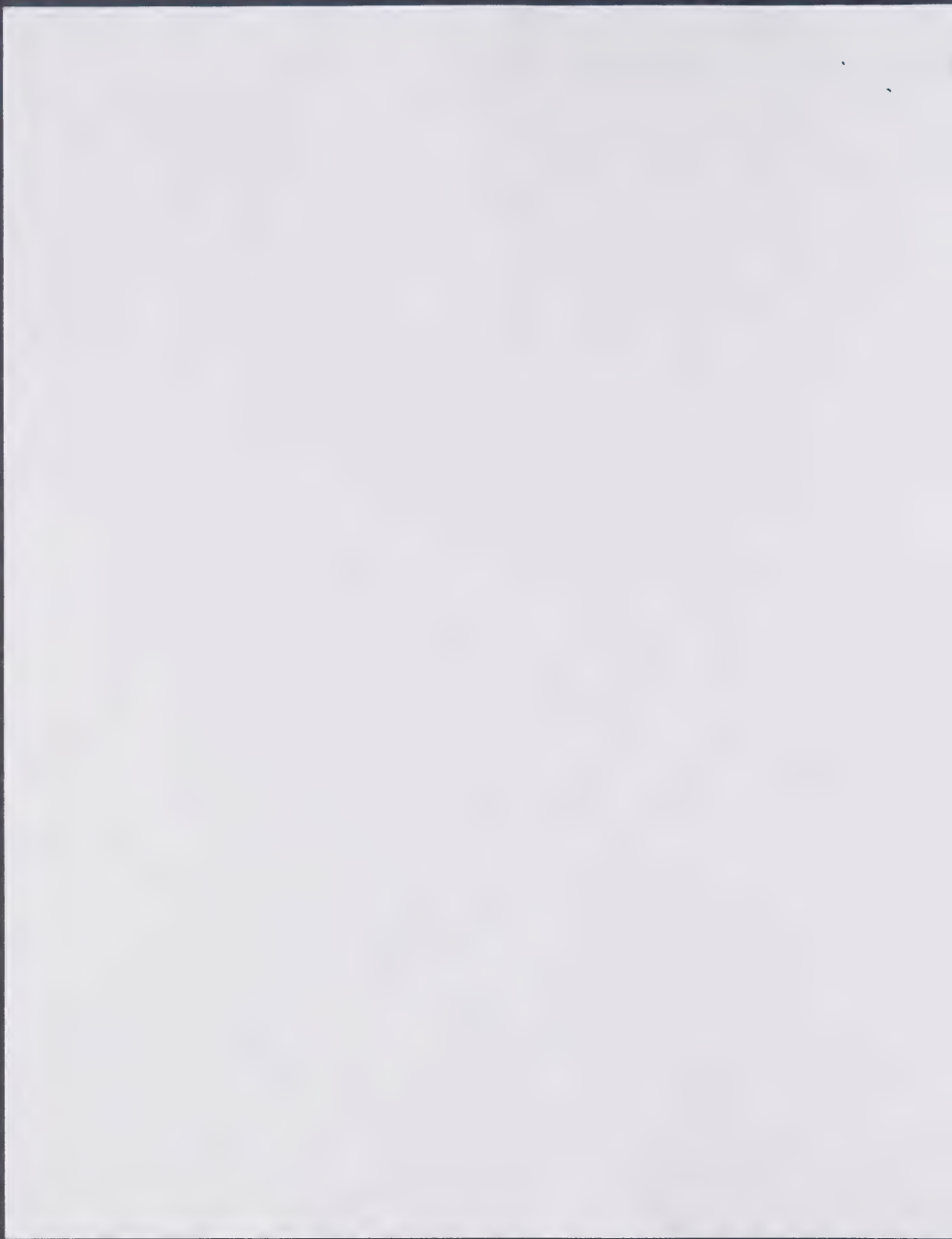
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The glass vase in the flower piece contains the following species:<sup>7</sup>

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German Flag (top left)	<i>Iris germanica</i>
Opium Poppy (top)	<i>Papaver somniferum fimbriatum plenum</i>
Pot Marigold (top, behind)	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>
Rosa Mundi (bottom right and on the table-top)	<i>Rosa gallica</i> cv. <i>Versicolor</i>

Butterflies:

a. Blue (bottom left)	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
b. Red Admiral (bottom right)	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>



The fruit piece presents us with two sorts of grapes, a melon, a peach, cherries and red and white currants; in a white earthenware bowl are Seville oranges, blackberries and grapes, and on the gleaming pewter plate lies a split peach. There are several butterflies: above is a Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) in flight, on a vine leaf in the center a Large White (*Pieris brassicae*), and on the peach leaf at the bottom is a Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*). Again, pink and reddish tints are much in evidence. By and large, the composition follows the S-shaped line of the flower piece, with the hanging cluster of grapes at the bottom left and the vine-leaves at the top right. In order to achieve this effect, the table-top is situated higher than in the flower piece, leaving ample room for the signature. The desiccated leaves of the peach and of the vine leaf in the middle, its veins turning yellow, are beautifully rendered. In contrast to this effort Van Aelst painted relatively simple fruit pieces throughout his career, beginning merely with a cluster of fruit lying on a stone ledge, and occasionally adding a pewter plate.<sup>8</sup> But on comparing our fruit piece with those of Willem van Aelst, for instance a work of 1670,<sup>9</sup> we see the S-shaped construction to be a translation of his flower pieces, and not of his fruit pieces.

Undoubtedly, Simon Verelst was concerned first and foremost with the decorative value of his artistic production. However, he did not neglect the traditional symbolic content and this observation is borne out by a number of early flower pieces with a watch, which in turn relate to earlier paintings by Van Aelst. In these florals by Verelst, the rose leaves are very withered indeed. A similar Verelst fruit piece, placed in front of a landscape bathed in evening light, may also have connotations of transience.<sup>10</sup> If our flower and fruit pieces are actually intended as a pair depicting the seasons, it should be borne in mind that the potential seasonal aspects refer only to the flowers and fruit depicted and not to the cherries and currants, which are early summer fruits at a time when the peony is in bloom; and butterflies are usually past their prime by the time that grapes are ripe. We are reminded of Jan van Huysum, who composed his complicated bouquets of flowers that bloomed at different times of the year, thus creating an image that could never exist in reality.

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Sam Segal

<sup>1</sup> Sam Segal, *A Flowery Past - A Survey of Dutch and Flemish Flower Paintings from 1600 until the present*, exhibition catalogue. Amsterdam and 's-Hertogenbosch, 1982, p. 50. cf. Gerard de Lairese, *Het Groot schilderboek*, Amsterdam, 1707, Vol. 2, p. 356.

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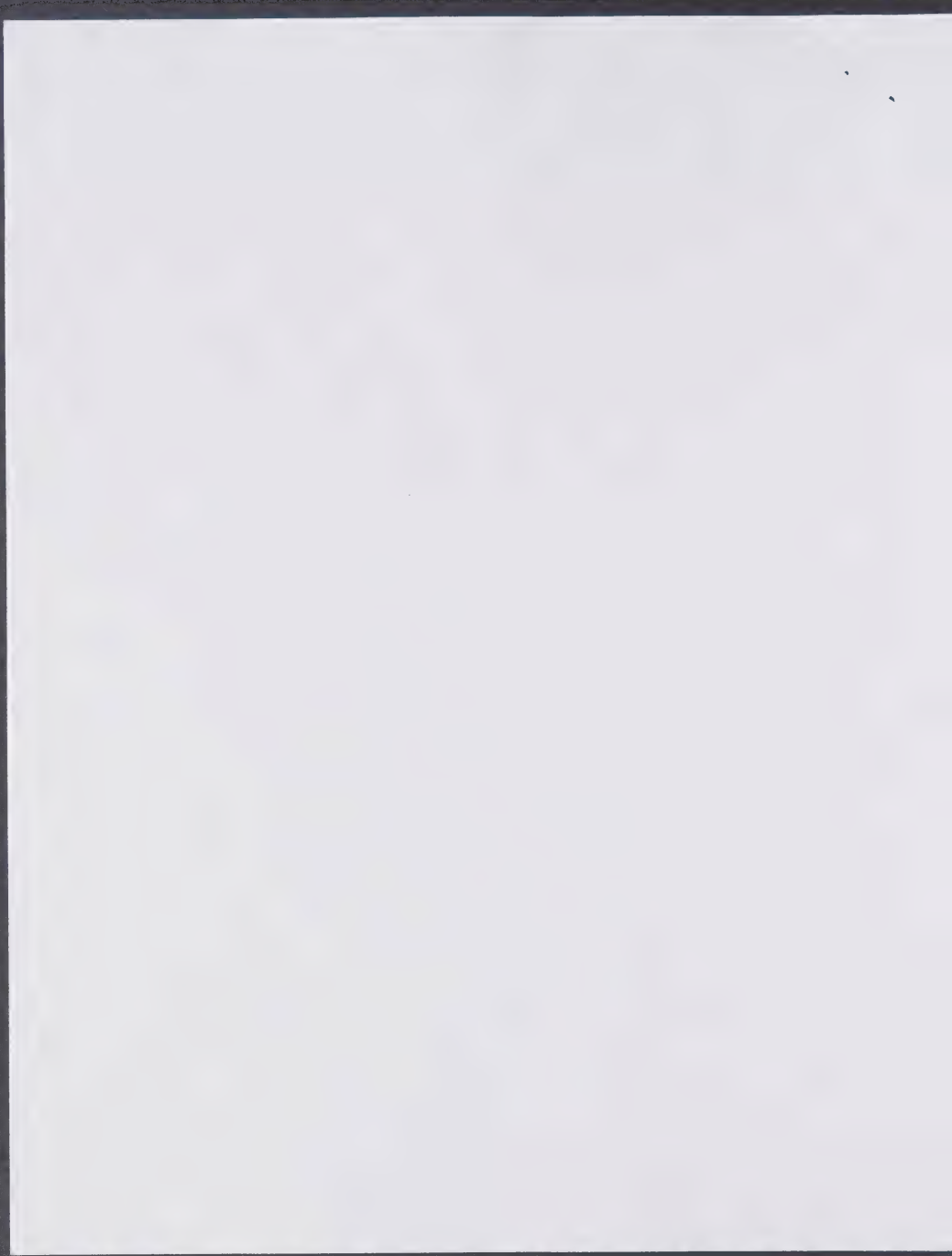
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Simon Pietersz Verelst (The Hague 1644 - London around 1710)

A pendant pair of paintings:

*An Opium Poppy and other Flowers in a Glass Vase and Fruit on a stone Table*, oil on canvas, 54.5 x 44 cm, signed at bottom right: *S. Verelst Fecit*

*Fruit on a Stone Table*, oil on canvas, 54.5 x 44 cm, signed and dated lower right: *Si. Verelst F a 1672*

Provenance:

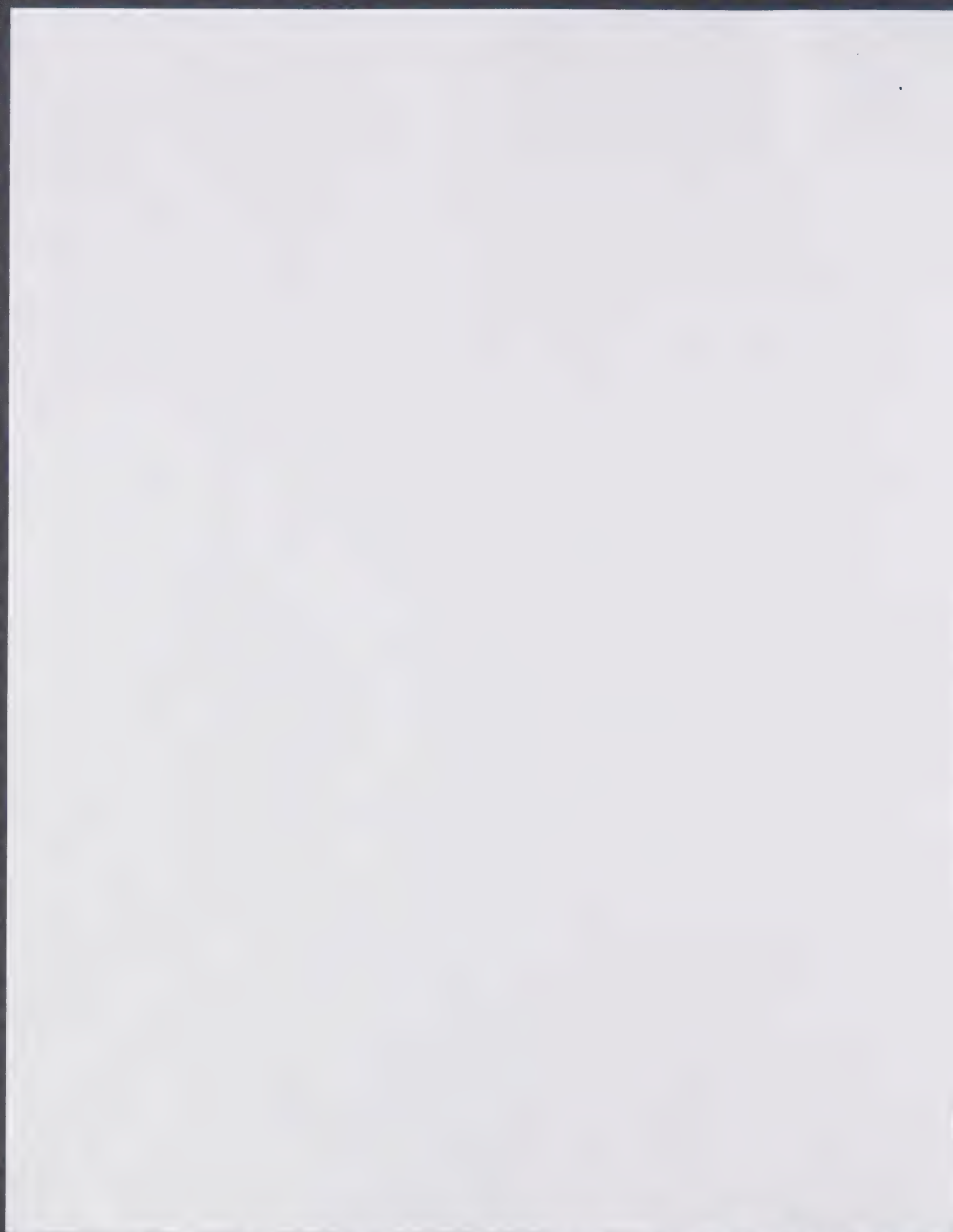
United States, private collection; New York, with Otto Naumann Fine Arts; purchased by Alfred Bader in 1995 (flower piece) and 2003 (fruit piece), for Isabel Bader; Milwaukee, collection of Isabel Bader

Literature:

Walter Liedtke, "Pepys and the Pictorial Arts," *Apollo* 138, no. 350, April 1991, pp. 230-231 (ill.); Willigen and Meijer 2003, p. 204 (fruit piece only)

Exhibitions:

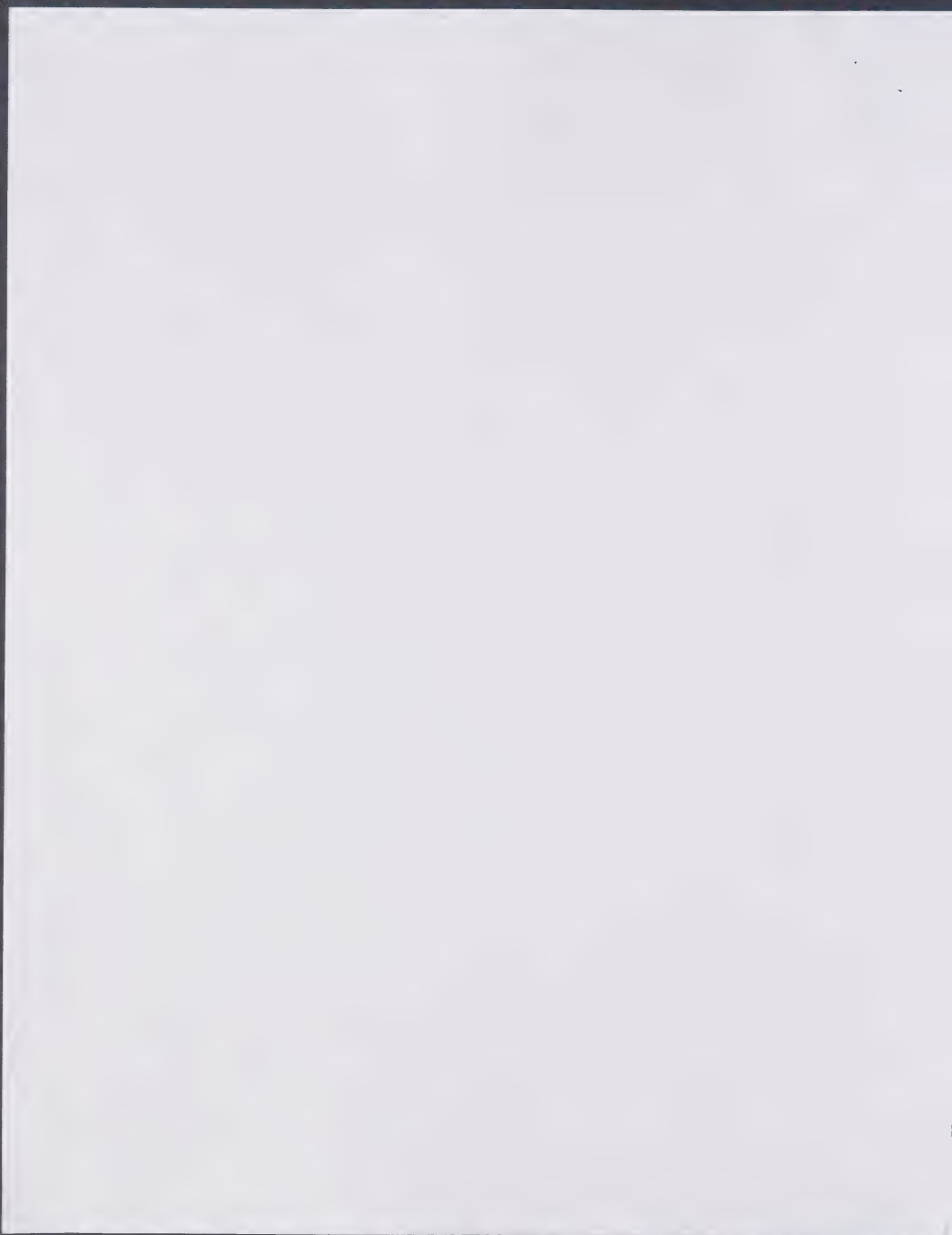
Osaka, Tokyo, and Sydney 1990, pp. 106-107, 224-225, nos. 56, 57 (ill.); Naumann 1995, pp. 122-126, no. 27 (colour ill.)



Copies:

1. Fruit piece: Oil on canvas, 52 x 41.5 cm, sale, London (Sotheby's), 26 October 1988, lot 116
2. Flower piece: oil on canvas, 54.5 x 43.2 cm, sale, London (Christie's), 29 June 1979, lot 33 (ill.); Amsterdam, with Waterman, in 1980

Simon Pietersz Verelst was one of two sons of the genre and portrait painter Pieter Hermansz. Verelst (around 1618 – around 1678) who took up the brush, likely training with him initially.<sup>1</sup> Simon took up the specialty of flower painting, and joined the painter's Confraternity in The Hague, *Pictura*, in 1663, while living nearby in Voorburg.<sup>2</sup> He appears to have chosen the work of Willem van Aelst (1627 – around 1683) as a model,<sup>3</sup> in particular his diagonal organization of elements, which he developed into a serpentine line. In 1668 or 1669, he left The Netherlands for London, where his recent arrival was recorded by Samuel Pepys in his diary entry for 11 April 1669.<sup>4</sup> Walpole reported him in Paris in 1680.<sup>5</sup> Verelst was widely celebrated for the extraordinary refinement and the evocation of reality in his paintings, but also for his extraordinary vanity, which led him to crown himself "The King of Painters," and to seek an audience with Charles II on familiar terms.<sup>6</sup> He was immortalized by several poets, including Matthew Prior (1664-1721),<sup>7</sup> and Jacob Campo Weyerman (1677-1747) reported on his activity in 1710,<sup>8</sup> however he was given as deceased when George Vertue (1684-1756) commented on him in 1717.<sup>9</sup>

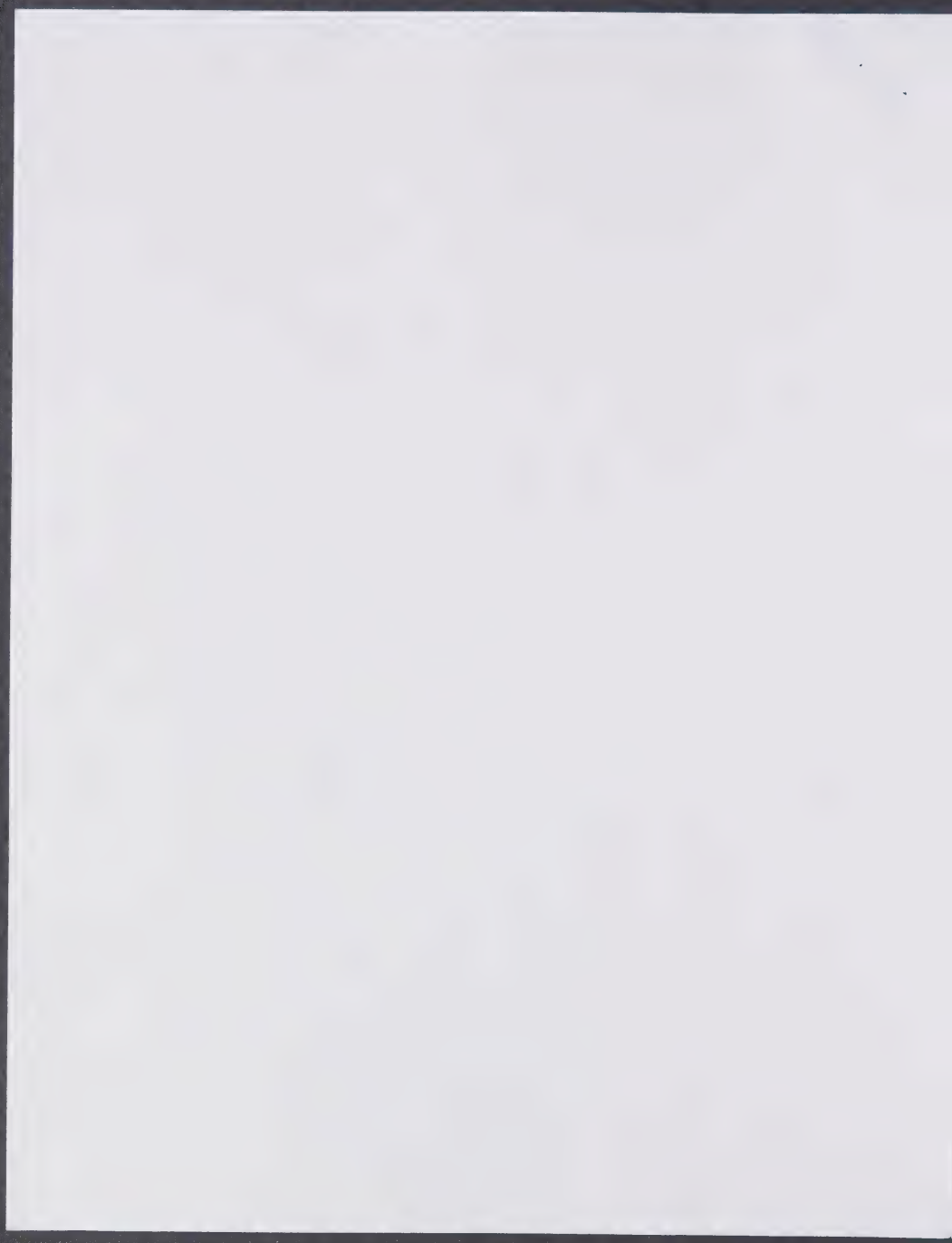


With corresponding dimensions and provenance, and handling, these two paintings form a pendant pair. Both can be dated to 1672, the year indicated on the still life with fruit, the painting that likely was meant to hang on the right. The flower piece shows the familiar S-curve arrangement that Verelst had developed before his arrival in England, and maintained for the rest of his career.

Characteristic of the highly developed genre of flower painting in The Netherlands in the 17th century, Verelst meticulously renders the specific characteristics of known species of flowers, and the examples shown here have all been identified by Sam Segal: African Marigold (bottom centre), Whitish Pink Rose (bottom left), Peony (overhanging), Snowball (Centre), Tulip (left), German Flag (top left), Opium Poppy (top), Pot Marigold (top, behind), Rosa Mundi (bottom right), *Rosa Gallica* (on the table top).<sup>10</sup> Segal also identified the two butterflies: Blue (bottom left) and Red Admiral (bottom right).

Whereas the strong light accentuates the Snowball in the centre, the highlight of this painting is the brilliant, effervescent Poppy Flower above, brilliantly set off against the cool sensual forms of the blue iris to its left. In addition, the bulky forms of the flowers composing the main diagonal axis contrast with the isolated, illuminated rose on a delicate stalk in the lower right.

On a similar stone table, with its corner off to the right, a selection of fruits is arranged in the right canvas. To the right of centre sits a red and yellow peach, still attached to a stalk, with two desiccated leaves hanging over the edge of the table. To its left, two halves of a split-open peach rest on a plain round pewter plate. In front of them is a stalk



of three cherries, one of which hangs over the table's edge. To the right of the whole peach, a bunch of white grapes hangs over the table's edge, with a bunch of red grapes behind them. The composition's center is occupied by a melon with brightly illuminated vine leaves rising above it. At the table's edge to the left are red and white currants. Further back, to the upper left, a blue pot emerges, holding more white grapes, and two ripe tomatoes. Verelst includes three butterflies, one, a Painted Lady, on the peach leaf at bottom, and a White on the vine leaves in the center.<sup>11</sup> A third, a Blue, flies off above. Although the composition features the same S-curve as seen in the flower piece, Verelst has placed the tabletop higher, and allowed some light to fall on the background.

Verelst's technique, based on that of Willem van Aelst, employed underpainting and a buildup of layers of colour in varnish, rather than oil; this binder accounts for the poor condition of many of his works.<sup>12</sup> The present two canvases are by contrast remarkably well preserved.

1. See: Sam Segal, in: exhibition catalogue Naumann 1995, p. 122.

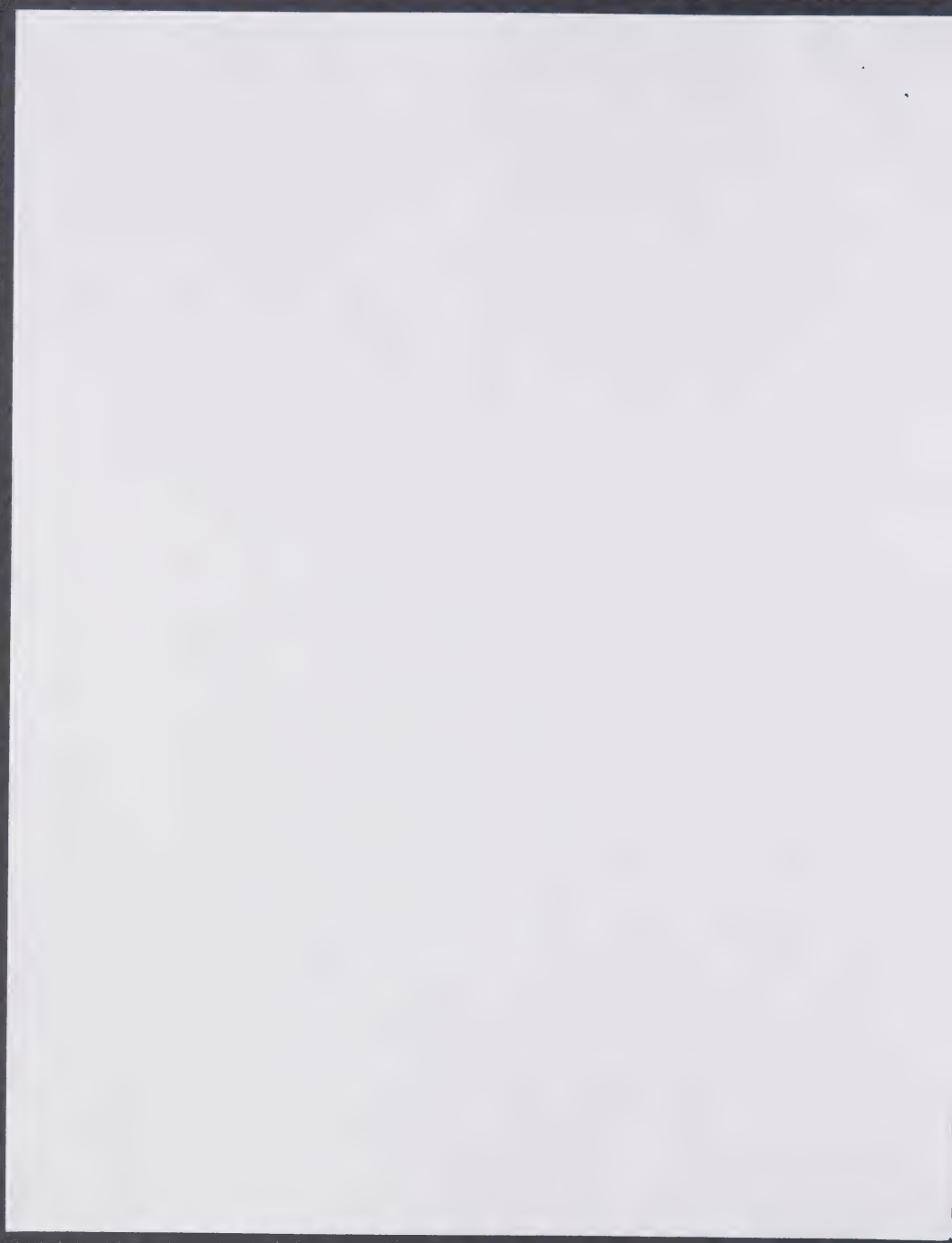
2. See: Obreen Archief, vol. 5, p. 156.

3. See: Sam Segal, in: exhibition catalogue Naumann 1995, p. 122.

4. See: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, eds. Robert Latham and William Matthews, London, 1970-1983, vol. 9, pp. 514-515, pertaining to: 11 April 1661.

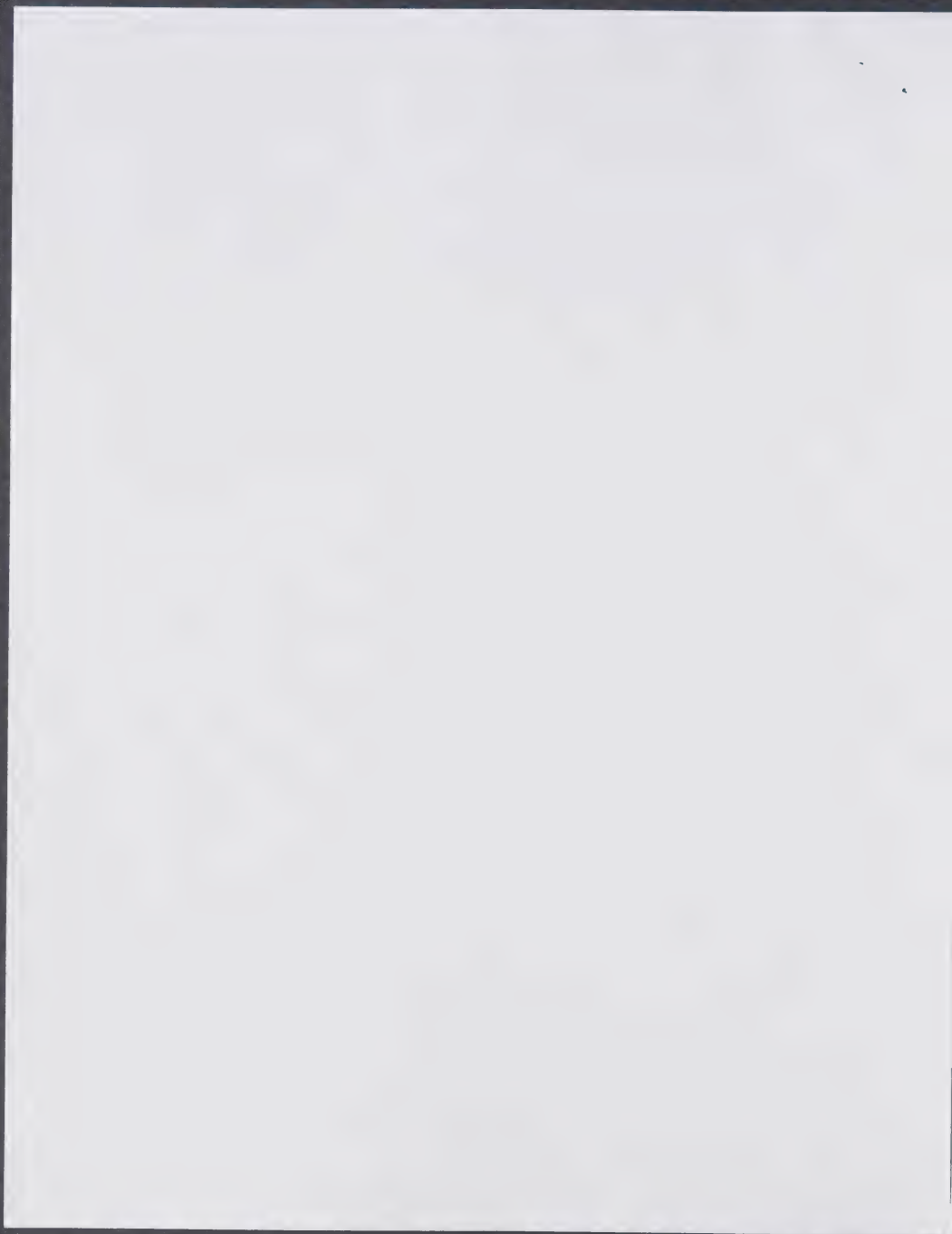
5. Vertue II, p. 80.

6. On Verelst's vanity, see George Vertue, in: Vertue I, pp. 32, 35.





7. For Matthew Prior's poem, see: Frank Lewis, *Simon Pietersz Verelst*, Leigh-on-Sea, 1979, p. 17.
8. Weyerman, vol. 3, p. 248.
9. Vertue I, p. 42 (1717).
10. Sam Segal, in: exhibition catalogue Naumann 1995, p. 124.
11. *Ibidem*.
12. *Ibidem*.



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SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST (The Hague 1644 - 1721 London )

*An Opium Poppy and other Flowers in a glass Vase; and Fruit on a stone Table*

the first indistinctly signed at bottom right in black: *S. Verelst Fecit*; and the second signed and dated at bottom right in beige: *Si. Verelst F a 1672*

oil on canvas

21 1/2 x 17 1/4 inches (54 1/2 x 44 cm.)

A pair

**Provenance:**

Private Collection, United States

**Exhibition:**

Osaka, Nabio Museum of Art, Tokyo, Tokyo Station Gallery, and Sydney, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Flowers and Nature - Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries*, 1990, nos. 56 and 57, reproduced.

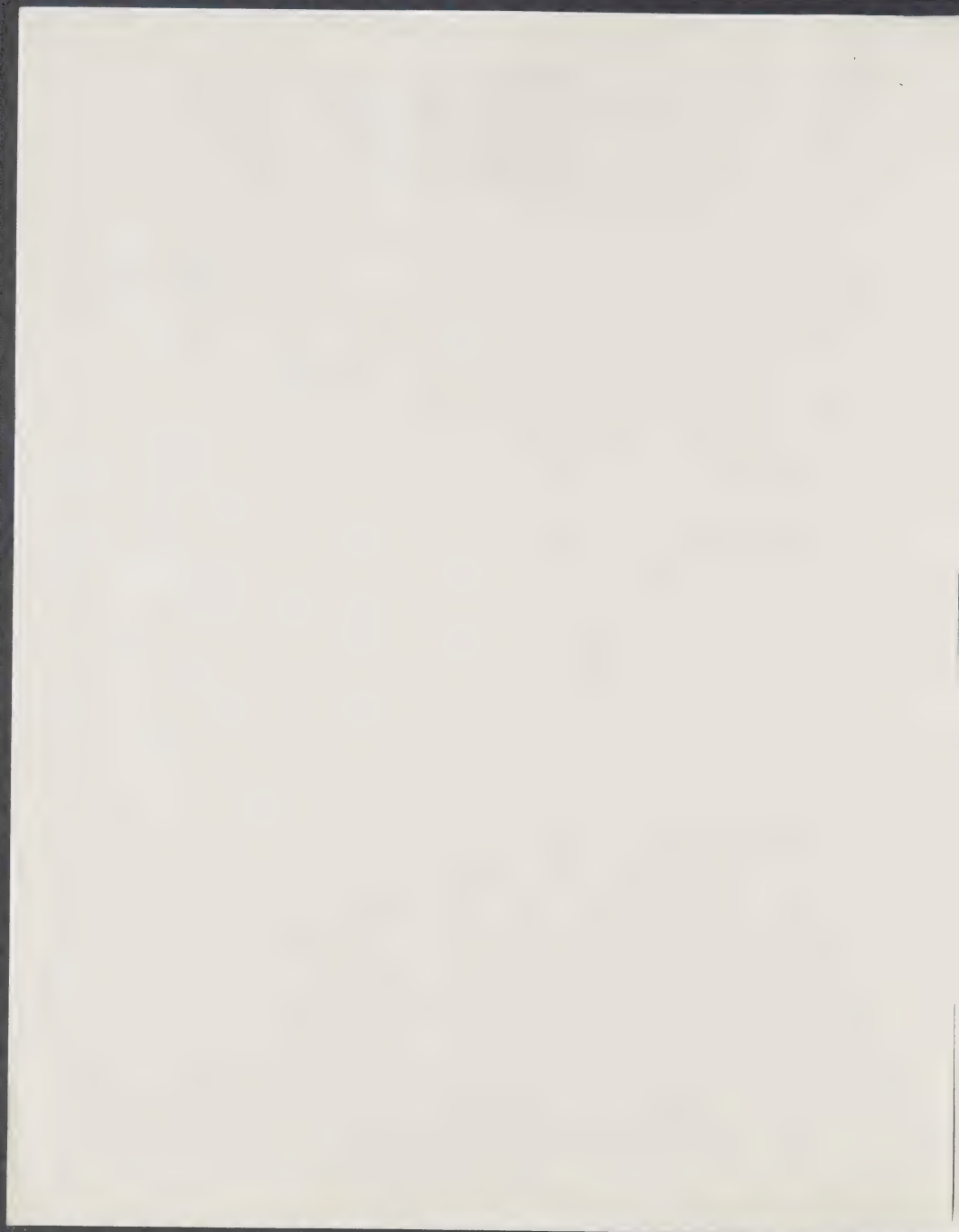
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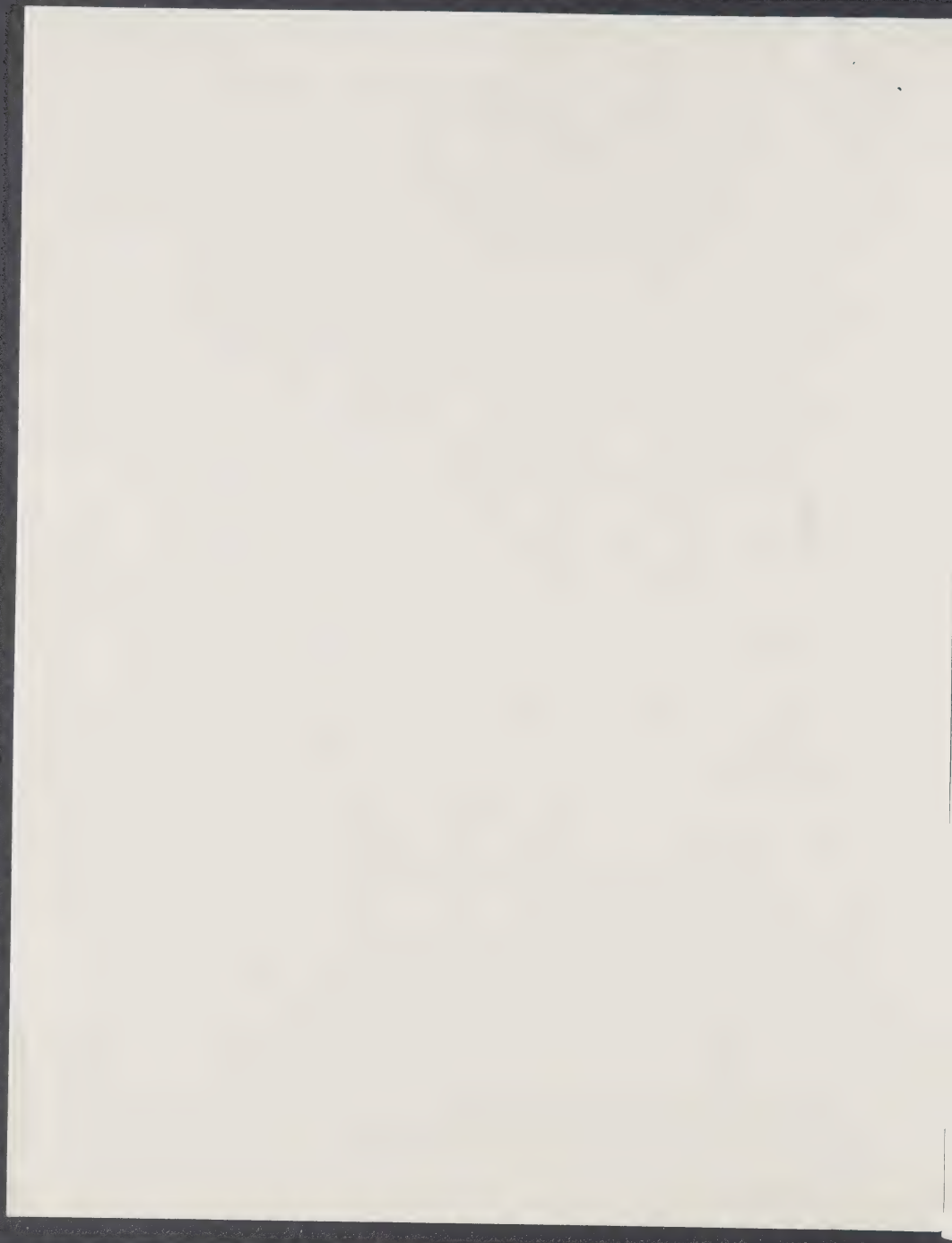
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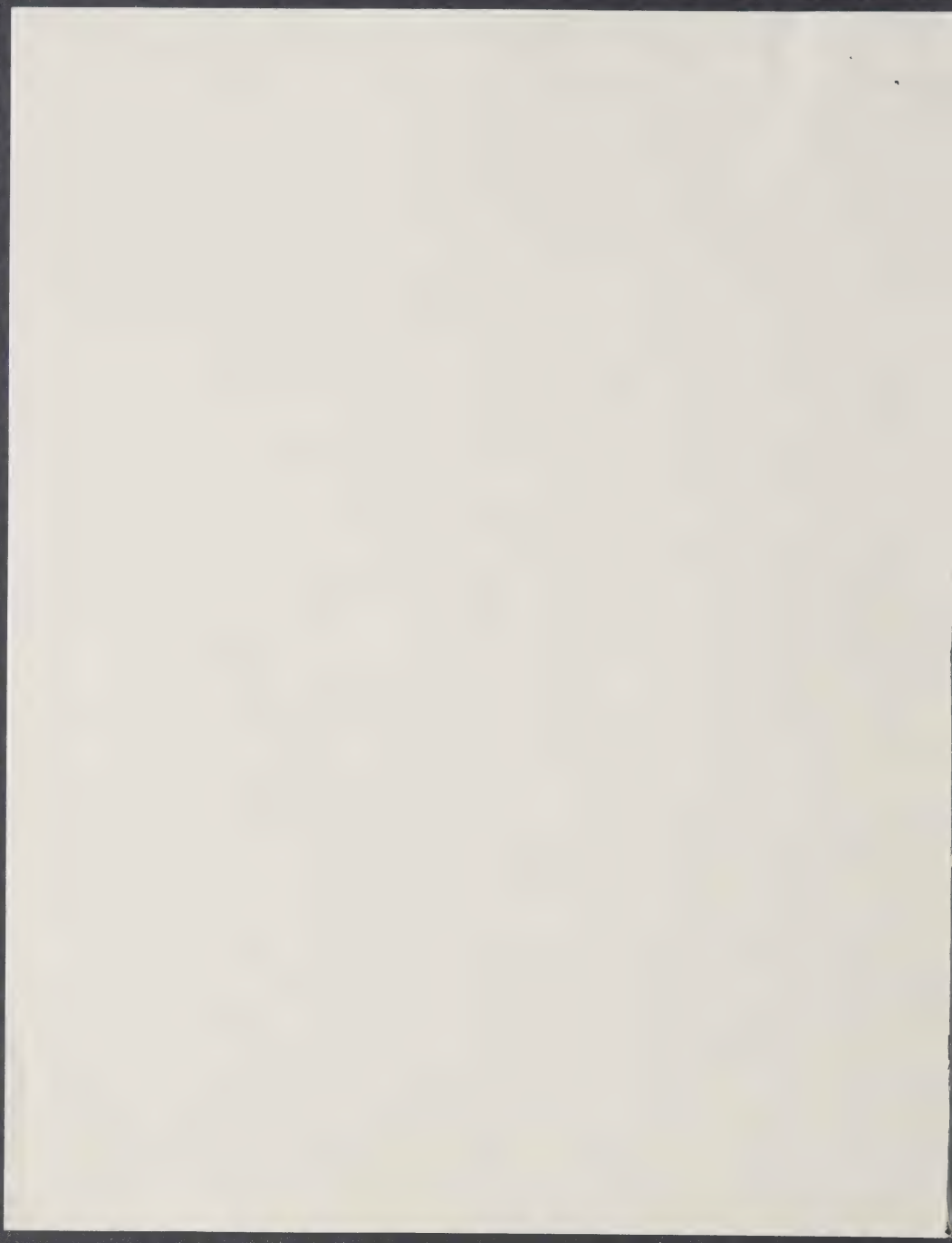
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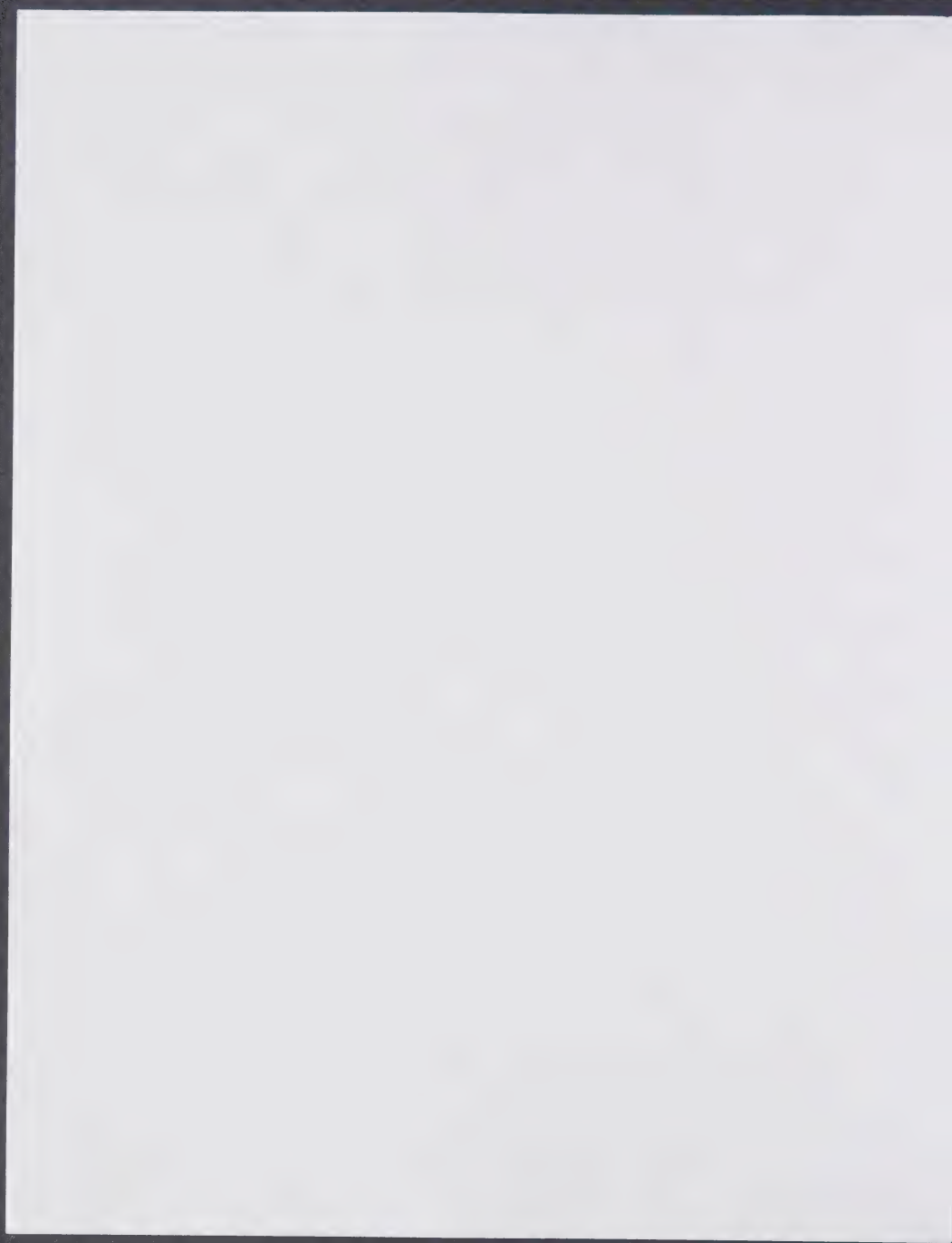
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27 Feb. 1990

Dear Sam,

I've just come from Mrs. Blumels, and the  
Verelst. are coming out beautifully. For  
the record, I copied the inscription:

Sc. Verelst. J<sup>a</sup> 1672

The flower picture has almost lost its signature,  
and all that remains is:

J<sup>a</sup>

If all goes according to schedule, you  
shall have the paintings in Holland by  
April 1<sup>st</sup>

Yours,  
Otto E.

PS: FEDE GALIZIA HAS BEEN PAID THIS WEEK!!

Both signed, but  
inscription on fruit  
piece is better  
preserved, and  
has the  
date

Handwritten notes in red ink, including the words "Handwritten notes" and "Handwritten notes".





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SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST (The Hague 1644 - 1721 London)

*Fruit on a stone Table*

signed and dated bottom right in beige: *Si. Verelst F a 1672*

oil on canvas

21 1/2 x 17 1/4 inches (54 1/2 x 44 cm.)

**Provenance:**

Private Collection, United States

**Exhibition:**

Osaka, Natio Museum of Art, Tokyo, Tokyo Station Gallery and Sydney, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Flowers and Nature - Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries*, 1990, no. 57, pp. 106-107, 224-225, illustrated in color (catalogue by Sam Segal)

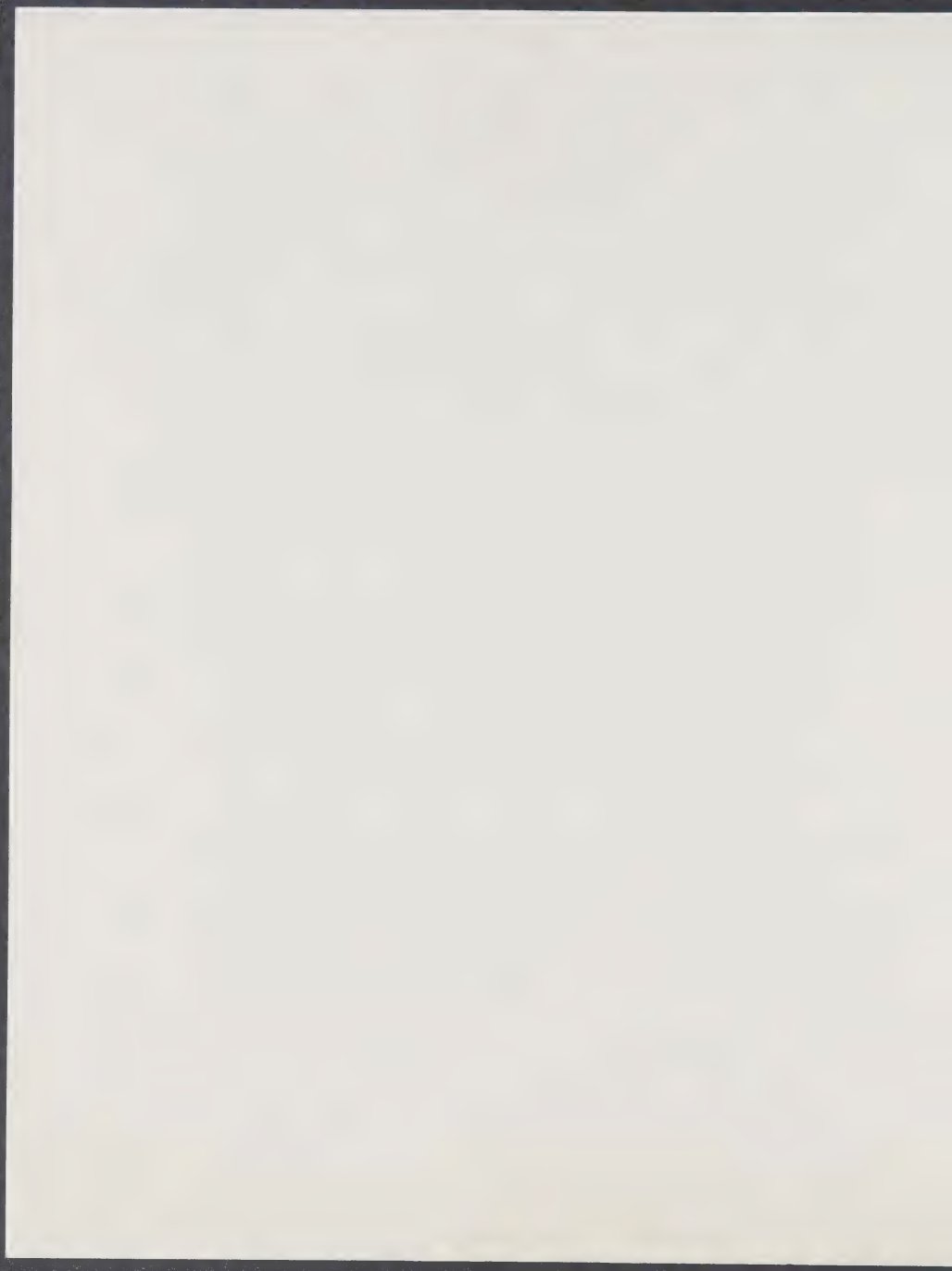
**Literature:**

W. Liedtke, "Pepys and the Pictorial Arts - 'Great Plent of Good Pictures'," in *Apollo* 138/350, April, 1991, pp. 230-231, fig. II

The present painting is Verelst's only surviving dated fruit-piece. On a ledge are seen two types of grapes, a melon, a peach, cherries and red and white currants; in a white earthenware bowl are Seville oranges, blackberries and grapes, and on the gleaming pewter plate lies a split peach.

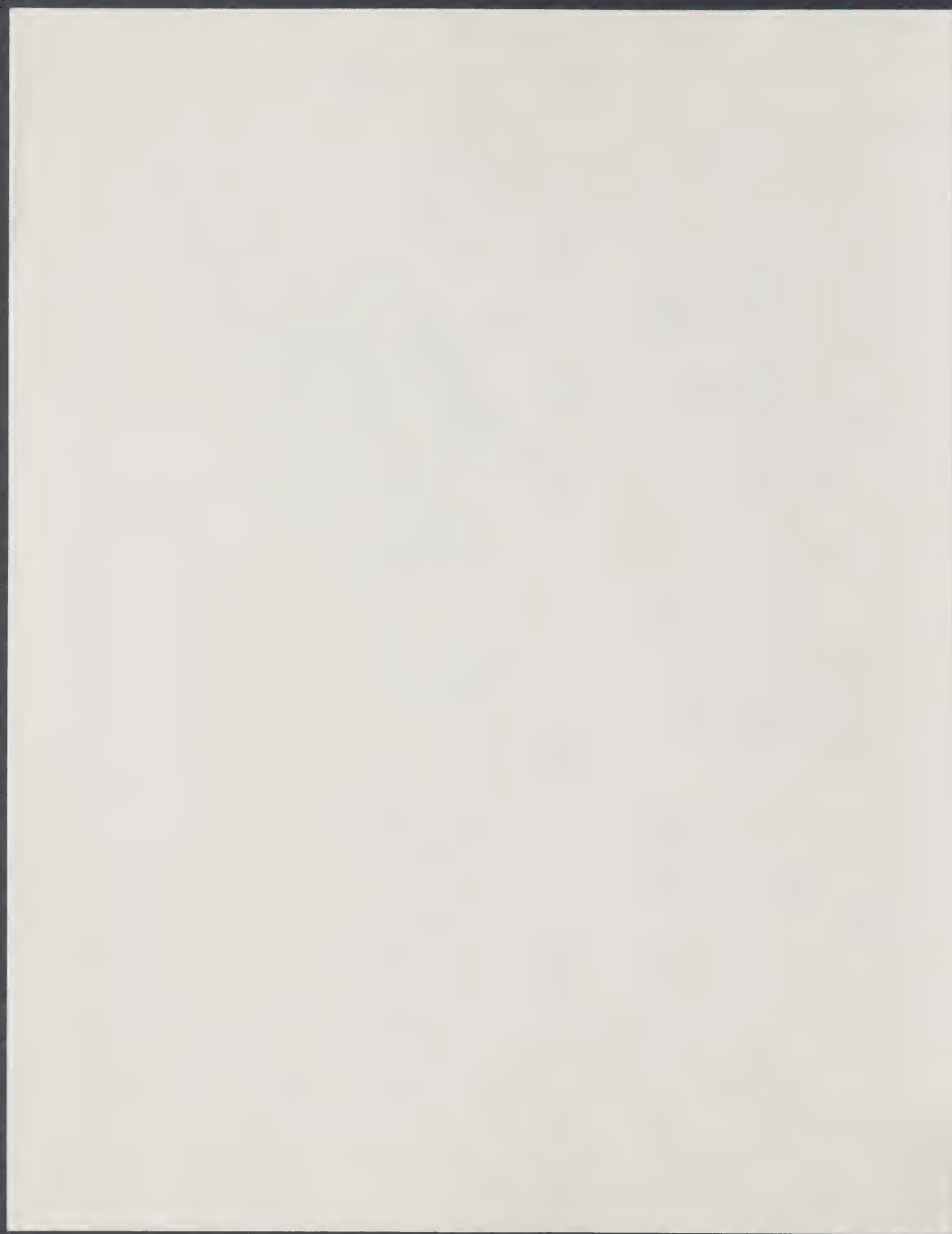
There are several butterflies: above is a Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) in flight, on a vine leaf in the center a Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) and on the peach leaf at the bottom is a Painted Lady butterfly (*Cynthia cardui*). By and large, the composition follows the S-shaped composition of Verelst's flower-pieces, with the hanging cluster of grapes at the bottom left and the vine-leaves at the top right. An unsigned copy or version of the present work, with differences, was sold at Sotheby's, London (October 26, 1988, lot 116, oil on canvas, 52 x 41 1/2 cm.).

Research recently undertaken during the cleaning of the present painting has confirmed Sam Segal's theory regarding Verelst's technique of painting with colored varnish. Relatively little of the artist's work has survived intact, and as such, the present still life provides a rare opportunity for study. We now know that Verelst used a technique whereby he painted a thin glaze of yellow over a thin layer of gray-blue paint in emulation of the painter Willem van Aelst. Verelst employed this technique when painting various types of flowers and foliage. Unfortunately, however, the



colored varnishes, which are integral to the painting's appearance, are often misunderstood by inexpert restorers and removed, leaving behind only the underlying gray-blue paint layer which Verelst never intended the viewer to see. During the cleaning of the present painting it was also discovered that Verelst began his painting by sketching a rough version in color on the canvas. Later he worked up the details, area by area.

Simon Pietersz. Verelst was born in 1644 in The Hague. His father Pieter Harmensz. Verelst (1618-1668) was a portrait and genre painter, who also produced a few still-lifès. He probably taught his sons Herman (1641/2-1700) and Simon to paint. In 1663 they were registered in the *Confrérie Pictura* in The Hague, an artists' association. In 1668 or 1669 Simon, Herman and Herman's son Cornelis moved to London, where Pieter's flower-pieces and portraits found great success. King Charles II bought six of Verelst's paintings, and his work was equally in demand among the nobility. It was not long before English poets were singing Simon's praises. His fame spread to Holland; in 1707 Gerard de Lairesse wrote that Verelst was the most celebrated flower painter of all time, ranking him above Daniel Seghers and Jan Davidsz. de Heem. All this seems to have gone to Simon's head. He called himself "God of Flowers" and "King of Painting" and generally behaved in an arrogant fashion that eventually led to his incarceration in an asylum. Although he recovered his sanity, he failed to regain his earlier fame. He died in London in 1721.





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LORENZSON 5

SAM SEGAL

FLOWERS AND NATURE  
DUTCH FLOWER PAINTING OF FOUR CENTURIES

Fruit Piece illustrated in color on the cover  
of Where magazine Feb. 1991

Flower Piece illustrated full page in color  
in Apollo magazine April 1991

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56 SIMON VERELST  
1672

57 SIMON VERELST  
1672

#### SIMON VERELST

Simon Pietersz. Verelst was born in 1644 in The Hague. His father, Pieter Harmensz. Verelst (1618-1668) was a portrait and genre painter who also produced a few still lifes. He probably taught his sons Herman (1641/2-1700) and Simon to paint. In 1663 they were registered in the *Confrérie Pictura* in The Hague, an artists' association. In 1668 or 1669 Simon, Herman and Herman's son Cornelis moved to London, where Pieter's flower pieces and portraits met with great success. King Charles II bought six paintings, and his work was equally in demand among the nobility. It was not long before English poets were singing Simon's praises. His fame spread to Holland; in 1707 Gerard de Laïresse wrote of Verelst as the most celebrated flower painter of all time, ranking him above Daniel Seghers and Jan Davidsz. de Heem.<sup>1</sup> All this seems to have gone to Simon's head. He called himself 'God of Flowers' and 'King of Painting' and generally behaved in an arrogant fashion, ending up in an asylum. Although he recovered his sanity, he failed to regain his earlier fame. He died in London in 1721.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> De Laïresse 1707, vol. 2, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> For an oeuvre catalogue, which contains many misattributions, however: Lewis 1979.



56 and 57  
SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST  
's-Gravenhage 1644 - 1721 London

56 Opium Poppy and other flowers in a glass vase

57 Fruit on a stone table

Canvas, 54½ × 44 cm, no. 56 indistinctly signed at bottom right in black: *S. Verelst Fecit*; no. 57 signed at bottom right in beige: *Si. Verelst F à 1672*; a pair Private collection

*Provenance*: Private collection, United States.

*Remarks*: An unsigned copy or version exists of each work, differing in detail. The flower piece was at the Waterman Gallery, Amsterdam, in 1980: canvas, 56 × 45 cm, catalogue *Niederländische Stilleben des 17. Jahrhunderts* (exhibition in Munich), ill., the fruit piece in a sale at Sotheby's, London, 26 October 1988, no. 116, canvas, 52 × 41½ cm.

The glass vase contains the following species:  
African Marigold (bottom centre)

*Tagetes patula* L.

whitish pink Rose (bottom left)

*Rosa provincialis* .Mill. x *R. alba* L.

Peony (overhanging)

*Paeonia officinalis* L. *salmonea plena*

Snowball (centre)

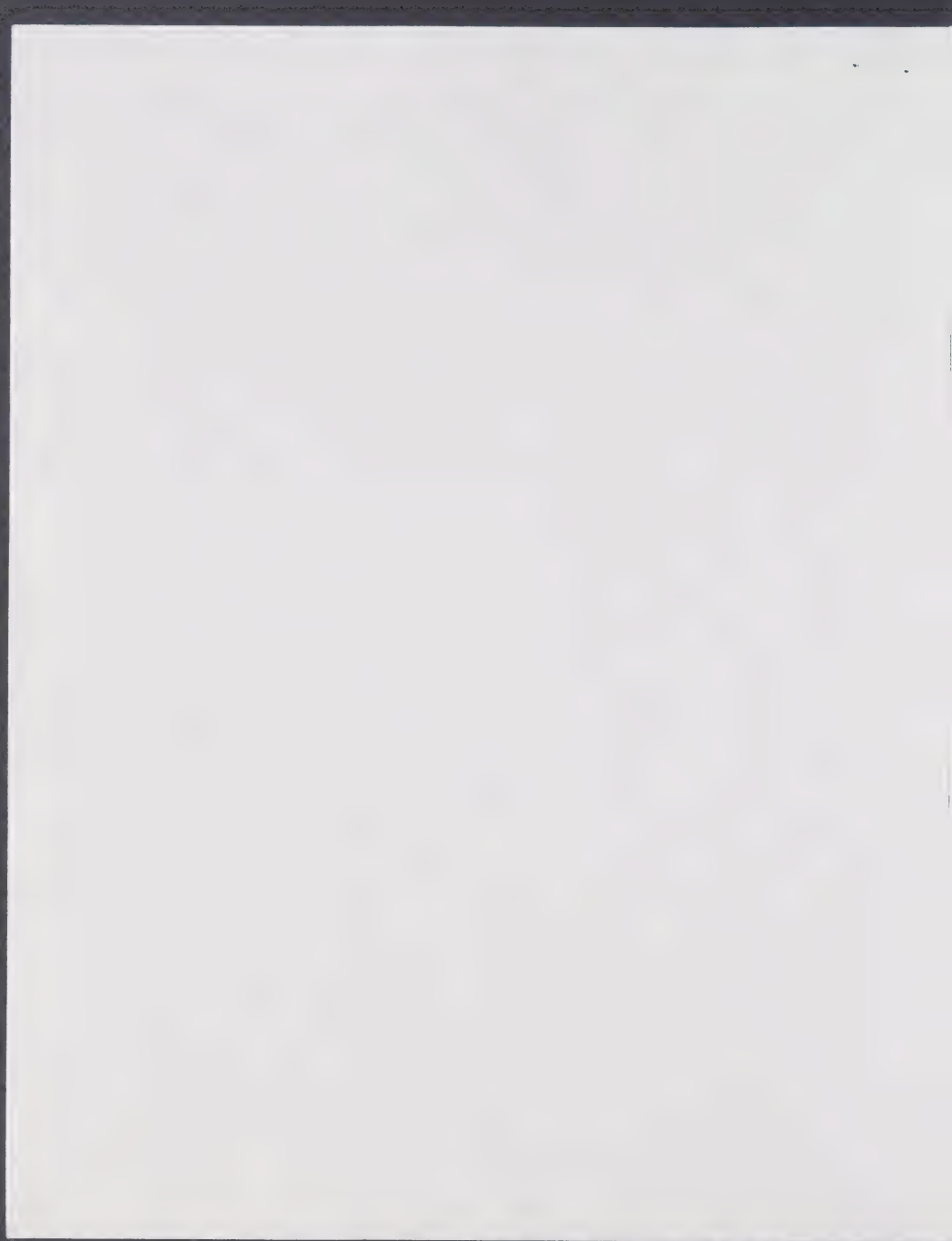
*Viburnum opulus* L. cv. *Roseum*

Tulip (left)

*Tulipa schrenkii* Reg. x *T. biflora* Pall.

German Flag (top left)

*Iris germanica* L.





Opium Poppy (top)  
*Papaver somniferum* L. *fimbriatum plenum*  
 Pot Marigold (top, behind)  
*Calendula officinalis* L.  
 Rosa Mundi (bottom right)  
*Rosa gallica* L. cv. *Versicolor*  
 and on the table top

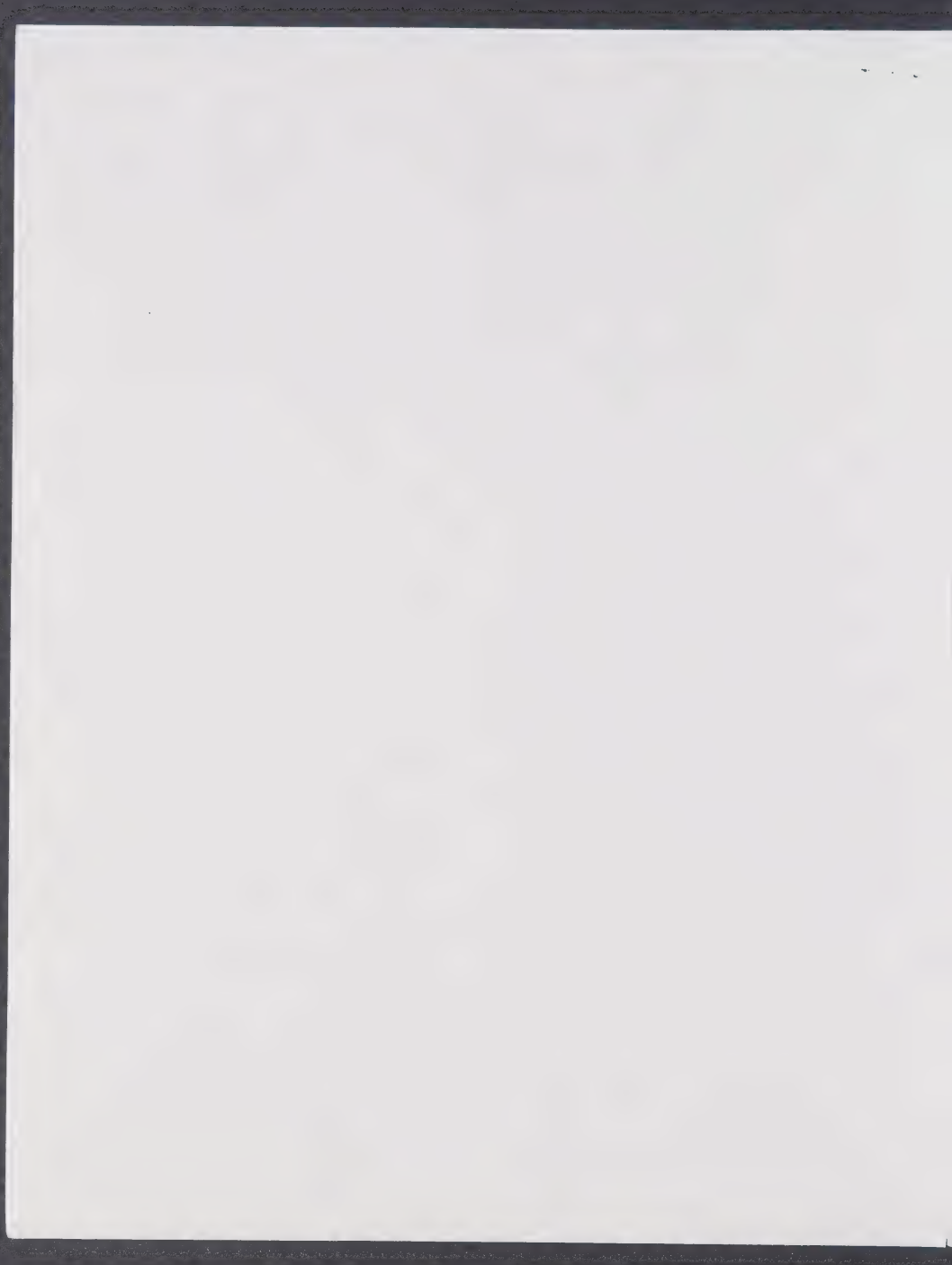
Blue (bottom left)  
*Polyommatus icarus* (Rott.)  
 Red Admiral (bottom right)  
*Vanessa atalanta* (L.)

The flower piece is based on a characteristic compositional and colour scheme in Simon Verelst's work: an S-shaped principal axis slanting up to the right with a striking flower or leaf at either end in white and pink, orange or red. These are the colours which usually determine the picture, local underpainting providing a warm tone. The pink tends to linger on in the autumnal hues of the rose-leaves, on which small, inflamed spots of blight, highly detailed, can be seen. The casual arrangement of bent and curving stalks and the poppy's arched, curly foliage are other constant factors in Verelst's work. There are usually a couple of butterflies, rarely other insects or animals. The total number of species in his oeuvre is limited, without his lapsing into literal repeats, apart from replicas. Close similarities do occur, but not without variation. His flowers possess the delicacy and semi-transparency of silk, like the rose, or are fluffier, like the peony. The foliage is an impor-

tant decorative element in the composition; poppy or vine leaves often have a somewhat oleaginous look, in contrast to the dry, parchment-like leaves of the rose. There are pronounced chiaroscuro effects, the central axis and especially the centre being fully lit. The flowers stand out against the background, which is always dark.

However, these characteristics are by no means always apparent, for relatively little of Verelst's work has survived intact. In many cases the leaves have turned a silvery-grey, and the flowers have deteriorated. Verelst worked with transparent layers of fast-drying coloured varnishes which are liable to disappear when inexpertly cleaned. In emulation of Willem van Aelst, a thin layer of yellow was painted over a thin layer of greyish-blue, but not always with glacia, which, although slow-drying, dries harder. Traces of the silver-grey layer underneath can often be seen on Verelst's leaves. Recent research, while both works were being cleaned, confirmed my original theory about the layers of coloured varnish.<sup>1</sup> It was also discovered that Verelst painted a rough version in colour first. The compositional schemes of both the flower and fruit piece derive in part from Willem van Aelst. In 1656 he painted a flower piece with a diagonal axis.<sup>2</sup> Later, the main axis acquired more elegant curves. In a flower piece of 1663 in the Mauritshuis, The Hague (fig. 56a),<sup>3</sup> some aspects of the work that Verelst was to paint a decade later can be observed. It may be assumed that these two paintings are indeed a pair, an assumption that is supported by their provenance and measurements, and also by the similar materials and technique. Verelst painted a large variety of formats, but hardly ever two identical formats. Only the fruit piece is dated, and is hence his only extant dated fruit piece. The flower piece is an example of Verelst's best period, his early years in England. Most of his few dated works were painted during this period.<sup>4</sup> His later work has less movement and is less meticulous, and the contours are more pronounced.

The fruit piece presents two sorts of grapes, a melon, a peach, cherries, red and white currants; in a high white bowl are Seville oranges, blackberries and grapes, and on the gleaming pewter plate is a split peach. Above is a Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) in flight, on a vine leaf in the centre a Large White (*Pieris brassicae*), and on the peach leaf at the bottom is a Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*). Again, pink and reddish tints are much in evidence. By and large, the composition follows the S-shaped line of the flower piece, with the hanging cluster of grapes at the bottom left and the vine-leaves at the top right. In order to achieve this effect, the table-top is higher



than in the flower piece, leaving room for the signature. The desiccated leaves of the peach and of the vine leaf in the middle, its veins turning yellow, are beautifully done. Van Aelst painted relatively simple fruit pieces from the start of his career, with the fruit lying on a stone ledge. He sometimes added a pewter plate.<sup>5</sup> But on comparing our fruit piece with those of Willem van Aelst, for instance a work of 1670 (fig. 57a),<sup>6</sup> we see the S-shaped construction to be a translation of his flower pieces, and not of his fruit pieces.

Simon Verelst was probably concerned first and foremost with the decorative value. He did not forget the traditional symbolical content, though. This is borne out by a number of early flower pieces with a watch, as in some paintings by Van Aelst (fig. 56a). In these flower pieces of Verelst's, the rose leaves are very withered indeed. A similar Verelst fruit piece, placed in front of a landscape bathed in evening light, may also have connotations of transience.<sup>7</sup> If the flower and fruit pieces really are a pair depicting the seasons, it should be borne in mind that the seasonal aspects only refer to flowers and fruit in general, for cherries and currants are early summer fruits at a time when the peony is in bloom, and butterflies are usually past their prime by the time that grapes are ripe.



56a WILLEM VAN AELST  
1663



57a WILLEM VAN AELST  
1670

<sup>1</sup> Segal 1982a, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kassel, inventory no. GK 905, canvas, 55 × 46.3 cm, signed and dated, museum guide 1977, p. 65, ill.

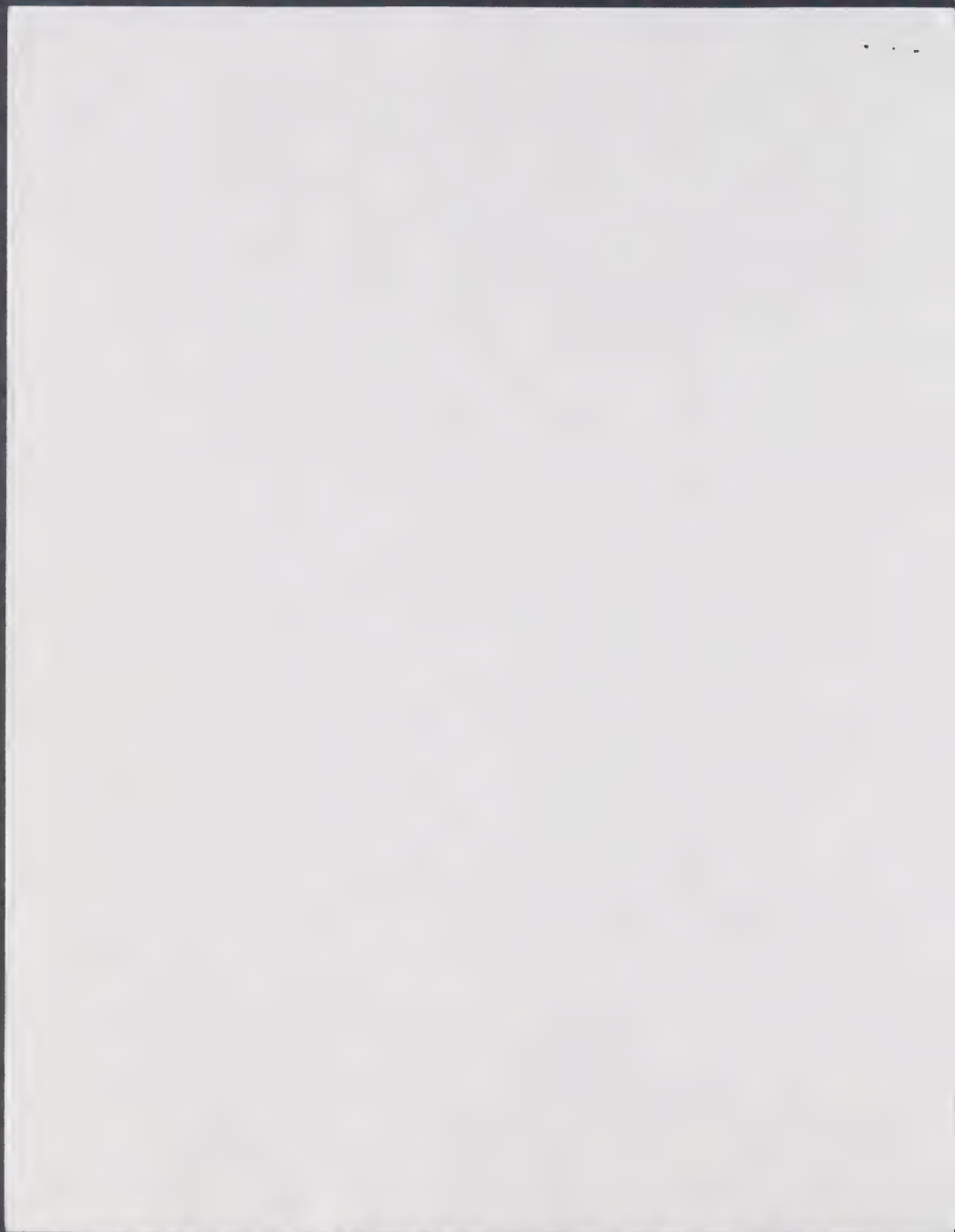
<sup>3</sup> Inventory no. 2, canvas, 62½ × 49 cm, signed and dated, museum catalogue 1977, p. 29, ill.; B. Broos, *Meesterwerken in het Mauritshuis*, The Hague 1987, no. 1, ill., with sketch and identifications by S. Segal; Warner 1928, no. 2d, ill.

<sup>4</sup> The flower pieces dated 1668 and 1669 are less sophisticated renderings. There are also a few flower and fruit pieces which are dated 1709.

<sup>5</sup> As in a work of 1652: sale A. Mak, Dordrecht, 7 June 1973, no. 3, ill.; canvas, 53 × 45 cm, signed and dated.

<sup>6</sup> Bob Habeldt Gallery, New York, canvas, 73 × 55 cm, signed and dated.

<sup>7</sup> Private collection, canvas, 115½ × 102½ cm, signed, in the literature as by Adriaen Coorte.





Opium Poppy (top)  
*Papaver somniferum* L. *fimbriatum plenum*  
 Pot Marigold (top, behind)  
*Calendula officinalis* L.  
 Rosa Mundi (bottom right)  
*Rosa gallica* L. cv. *Versicolor*  
 and on the table top

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*Polyommatus icarus* (Rott.)  
 Red Admiral (bottom right)  
*Vanessa atalanta* (L.)

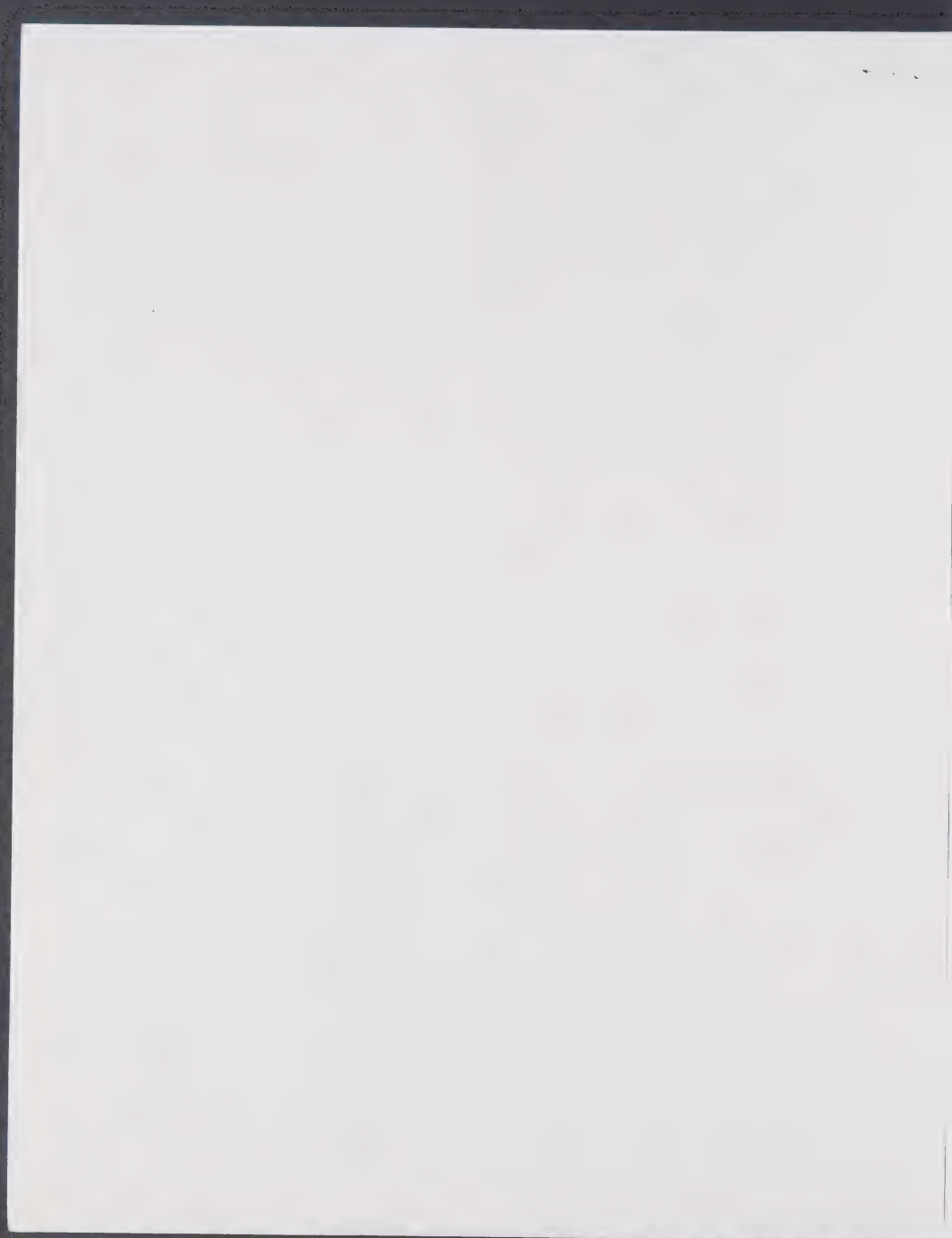
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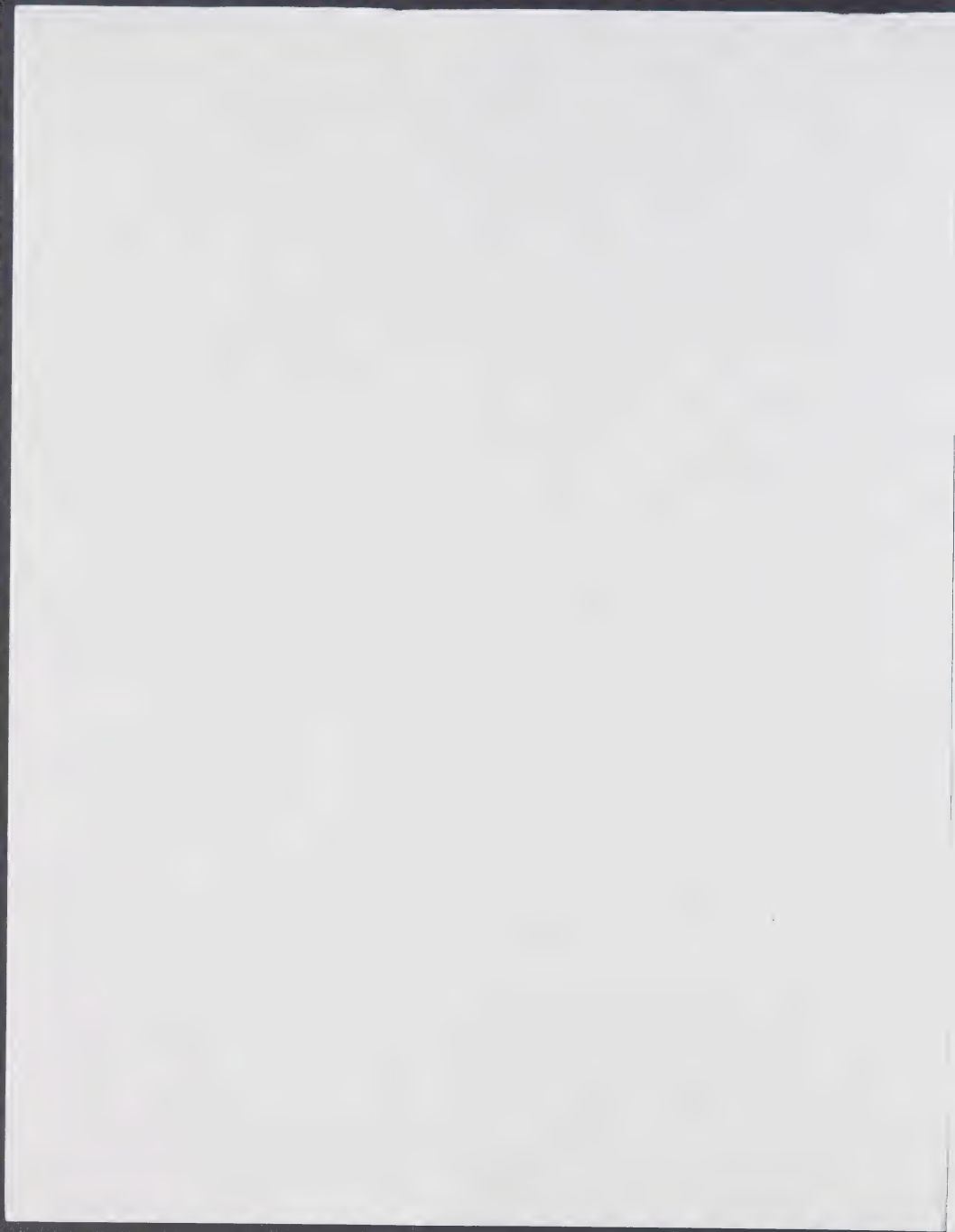


**W. NAIMAN**  
*and* **Harold L. ...**  
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Sincerely yours,

Wm. Naiman



Verelst

**Subject:** Verelst  
**From:** "Otto Naumann" <otto@dutchpaintings.com>  
**Date:** Mon, 10 Jan 2005 13:26:55 -0500  
**To:** "Alfred Bader" <baderfa@execpc.com>

Alfred,

I got you fax, and thanks for buying the Verelst. I think it belongs with its mate, just like you and Isabel belong together but were separated for years!

I guarantee that the painting will have the same frame. If it doesn't, I'll make sure it does, but as I recall I bought new frames for both paintings at the same time. The two old ones were lying around the gallery for years, and I put drawings into them. So, I'm more than 99% convinced the same frame is on this picture. If not, I'll change it.

I certainly hope you get the painting this week. If not, let me know.

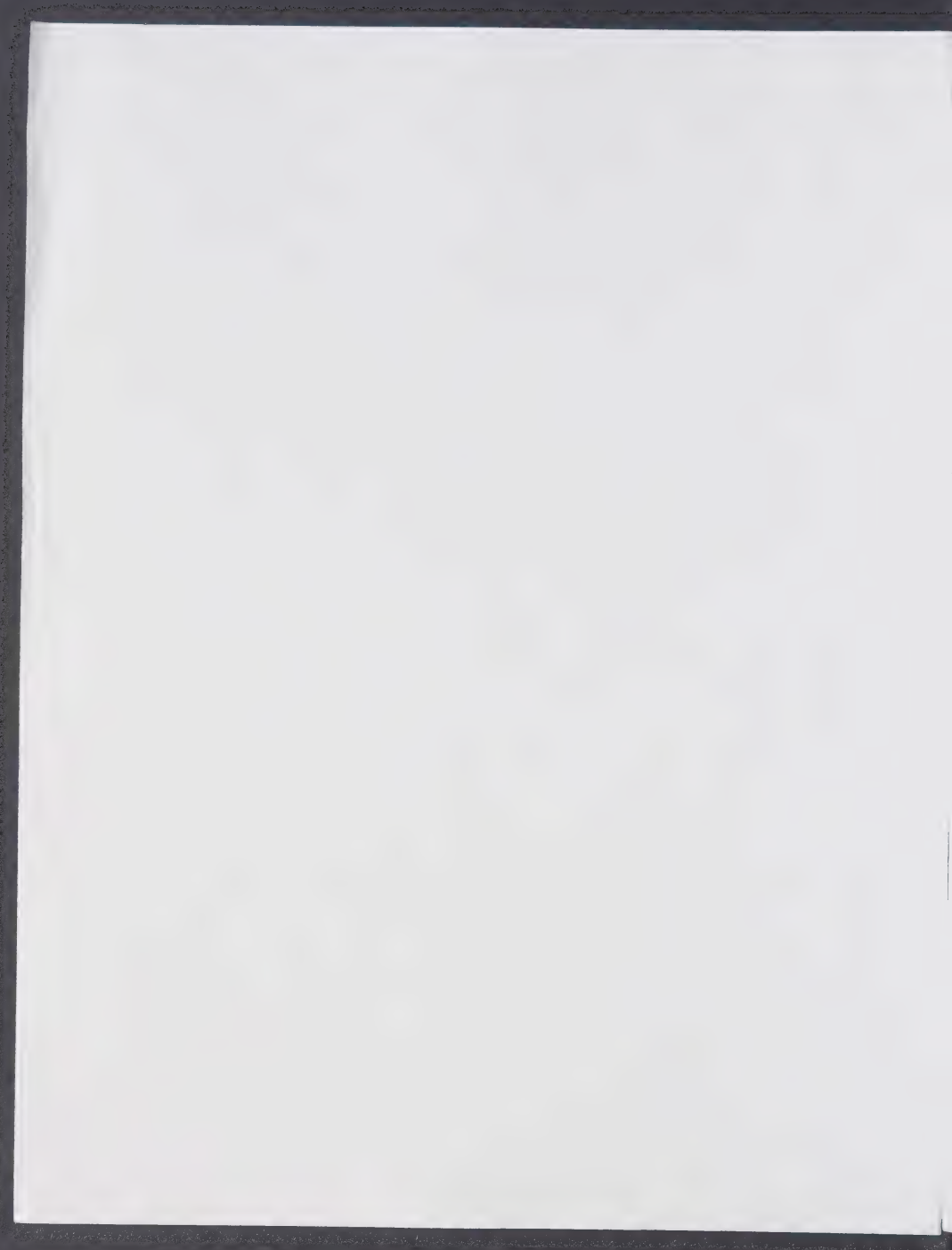
We will prepare your invoice to you personally, using North Shepherd as the address.

Yours,  
Otto

**Otto Naumann**  
**Otto Naumann, Ltd.**  
**22 East 80th Street**  
**New York, NY 10021**  
**Tel. 1 (212) 734-4443**  
**Fax.1 (212) 535-0617**  
**Mob. 1 (914) 320-7523**  
**Email on the run: [Otto1@tmo.blackberry.net](mailto:Otto1@tmo.blackberry.net)**

---

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FAX FROM:

*Alfred Bader Fine Arts*  
924 East Juneau Avenue  
Astor Hotel - Suite 622  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
Ph: (414) 277-0730  
Fax: (414) 277-0709  
www.alfredbader.com  
e-mail: baderfa@execpc.com

January 10, 2005

TO: Otto Naumann

Page 1 of \_1\_

FAX #: 212-535-0617

Dear Otto:

Thank you for your e-mail sent late on Friday afternoon.

I would like to buy the Verelst for \$150,000 cif Milwaukee, provided that the painting is still in good condition and the frame matches the frame of the Verelst I gave to Isabel for her birthday. This painting would be my gift to her for our 23<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary later this month.

David de Witt and his fiancée are arriving here this coming Thursday afternoon, January 13<sup>th</sup>, and if the painting could be here by Friday, that would help.

Please invoice me personally and not Alfred Bader Fine Arts.

Why ever did Joel Friedland want to part with this painting?

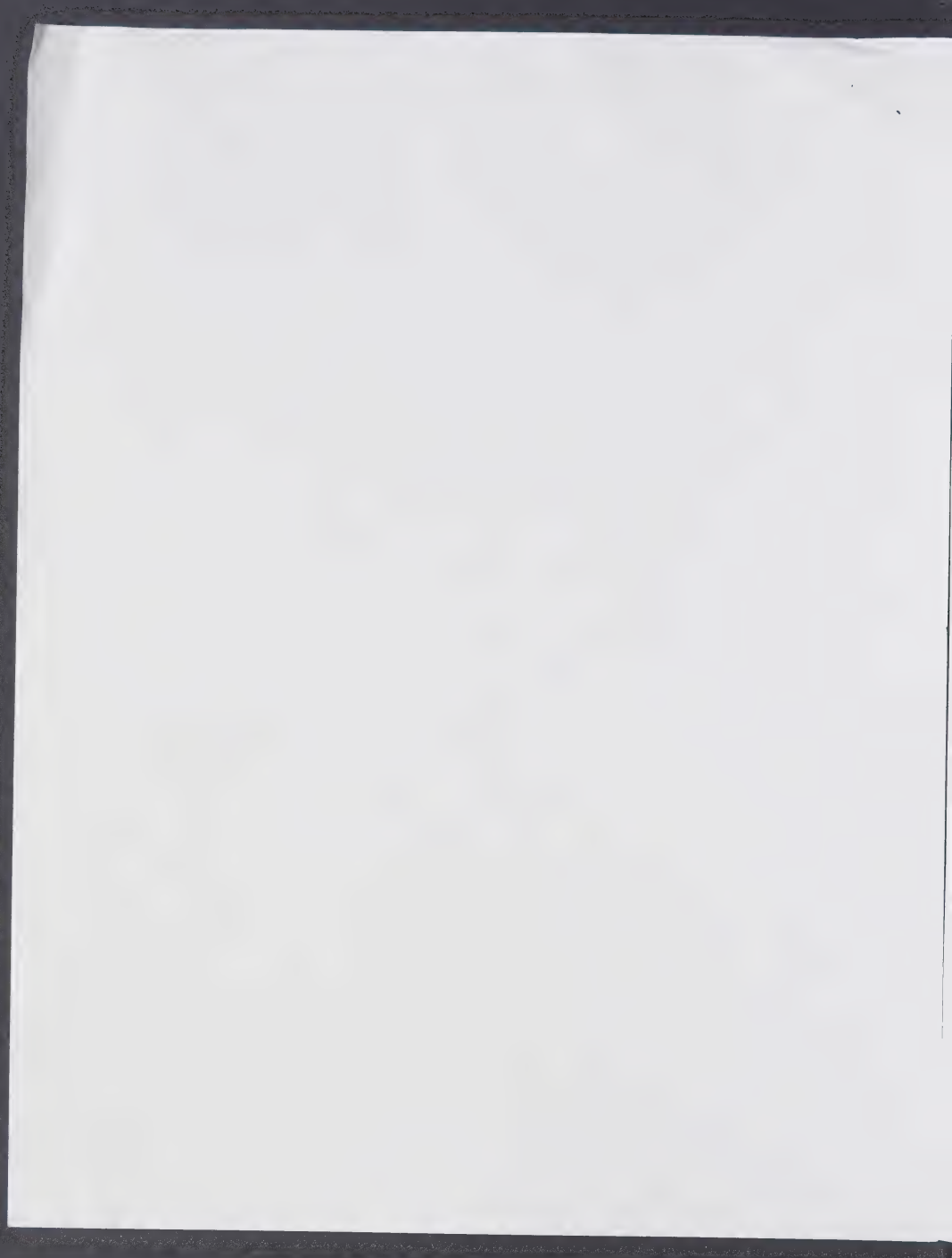
Would it make sense to ship the Verelst with the Soldi which was unsold at Sotheby's. I really don't remember why we bought this, but I might have a chance to sell it here. On the other hand, if you think that it might move better in New York, keep it there.

Best wishes,

Alfred Bader  
AB/az

*P.S. Please ship  
to the gallery*

*Thanks*

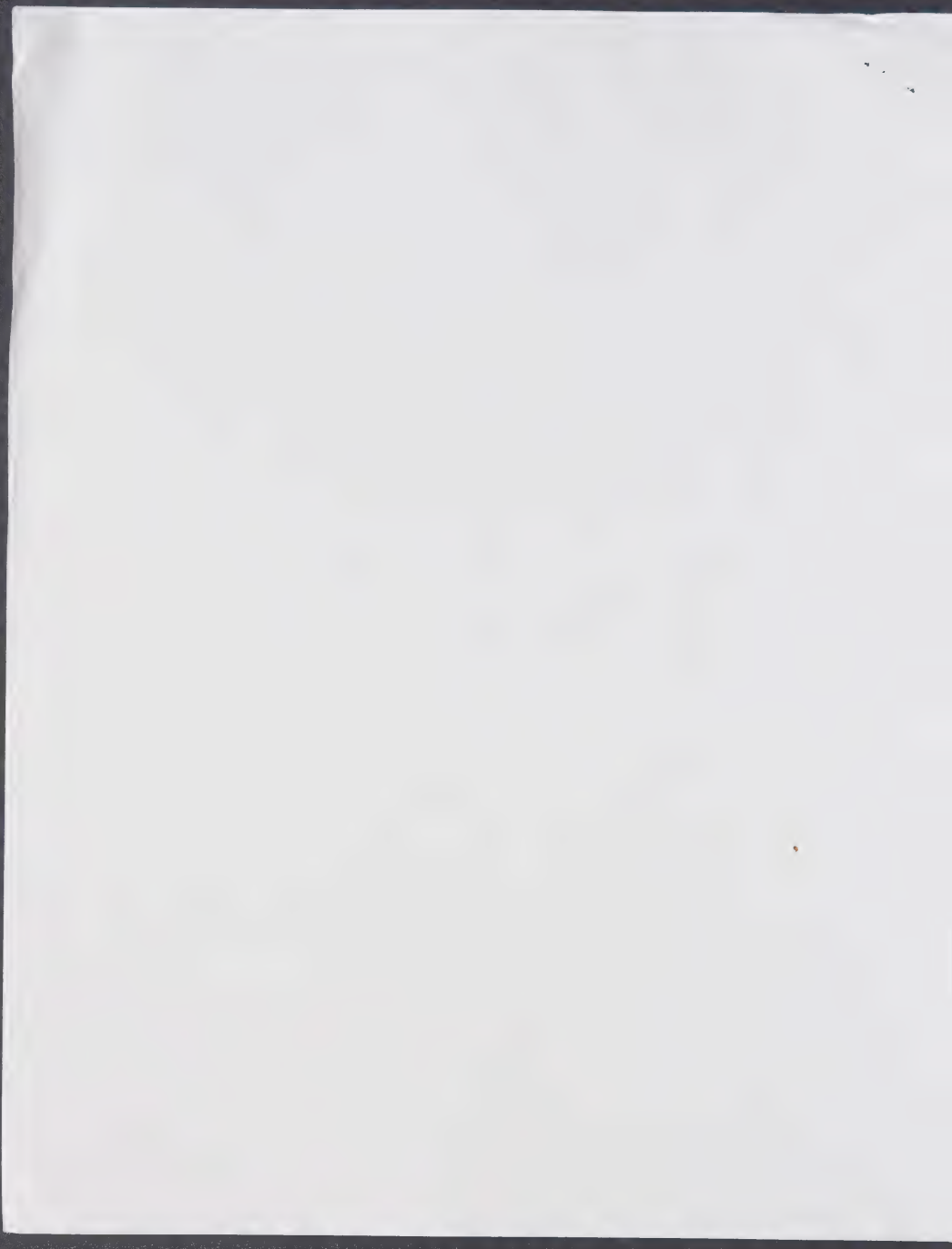


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signed and dated bottom right in beige: *Sl Verelst Fa 1672*

oil on canvas

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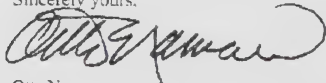
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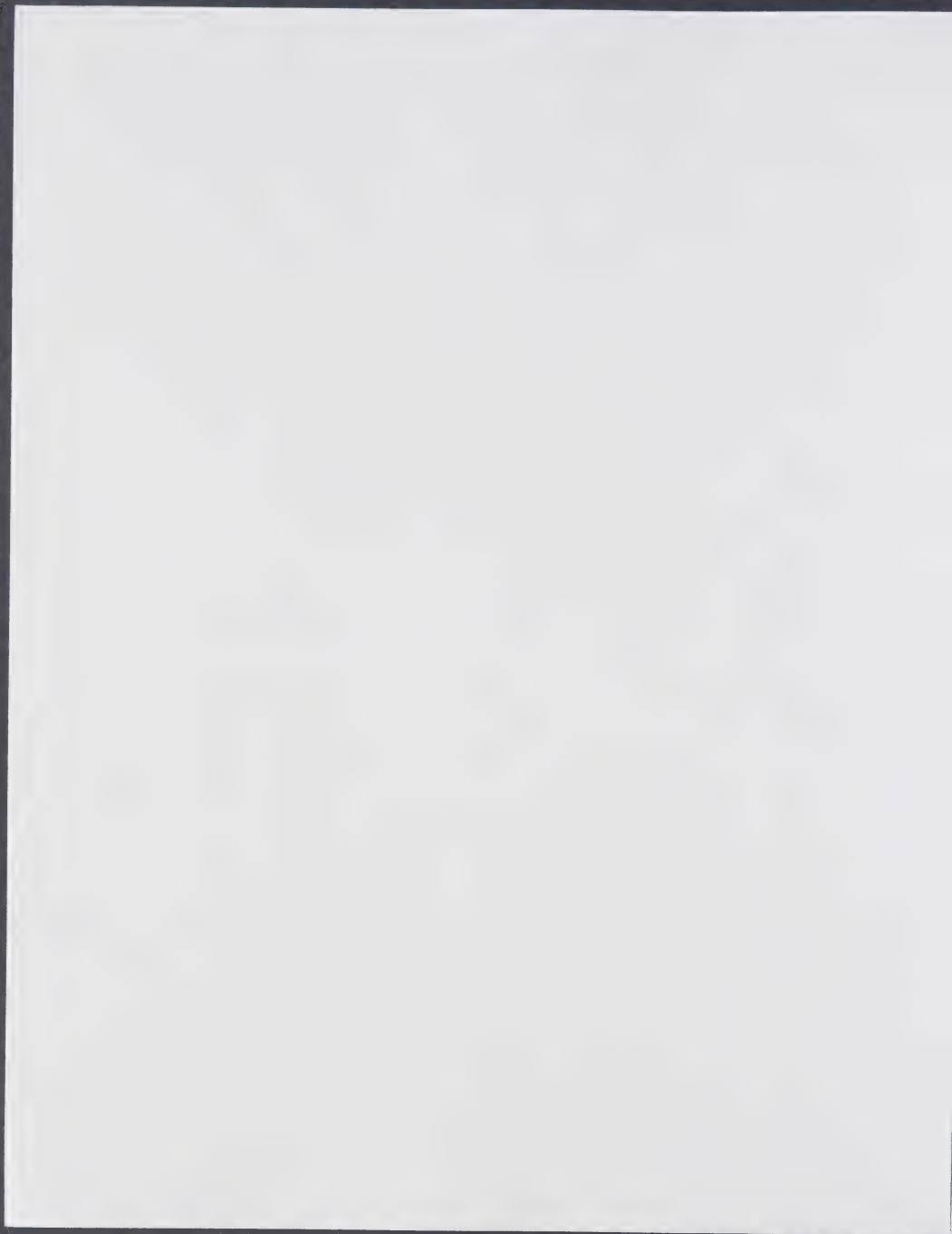
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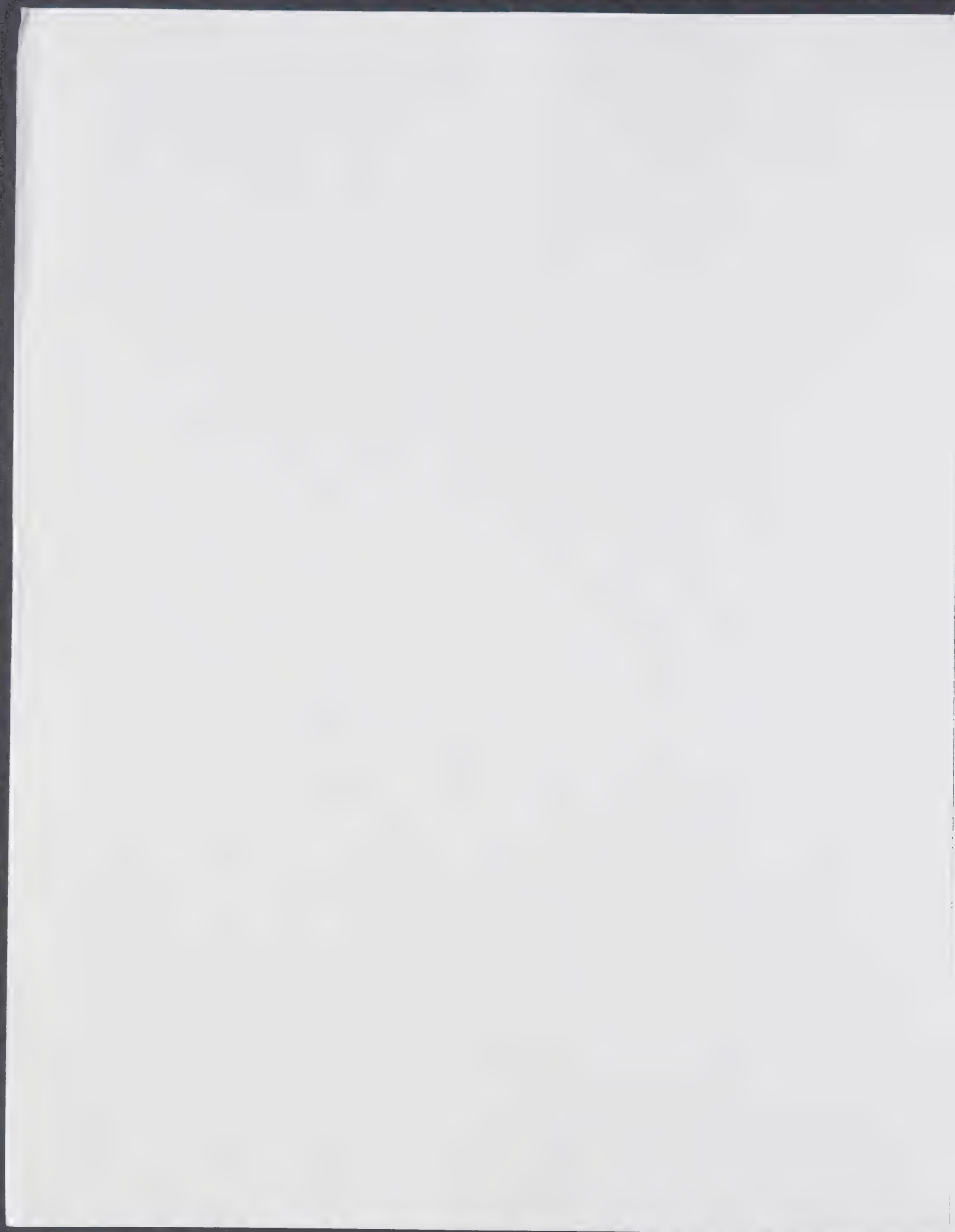
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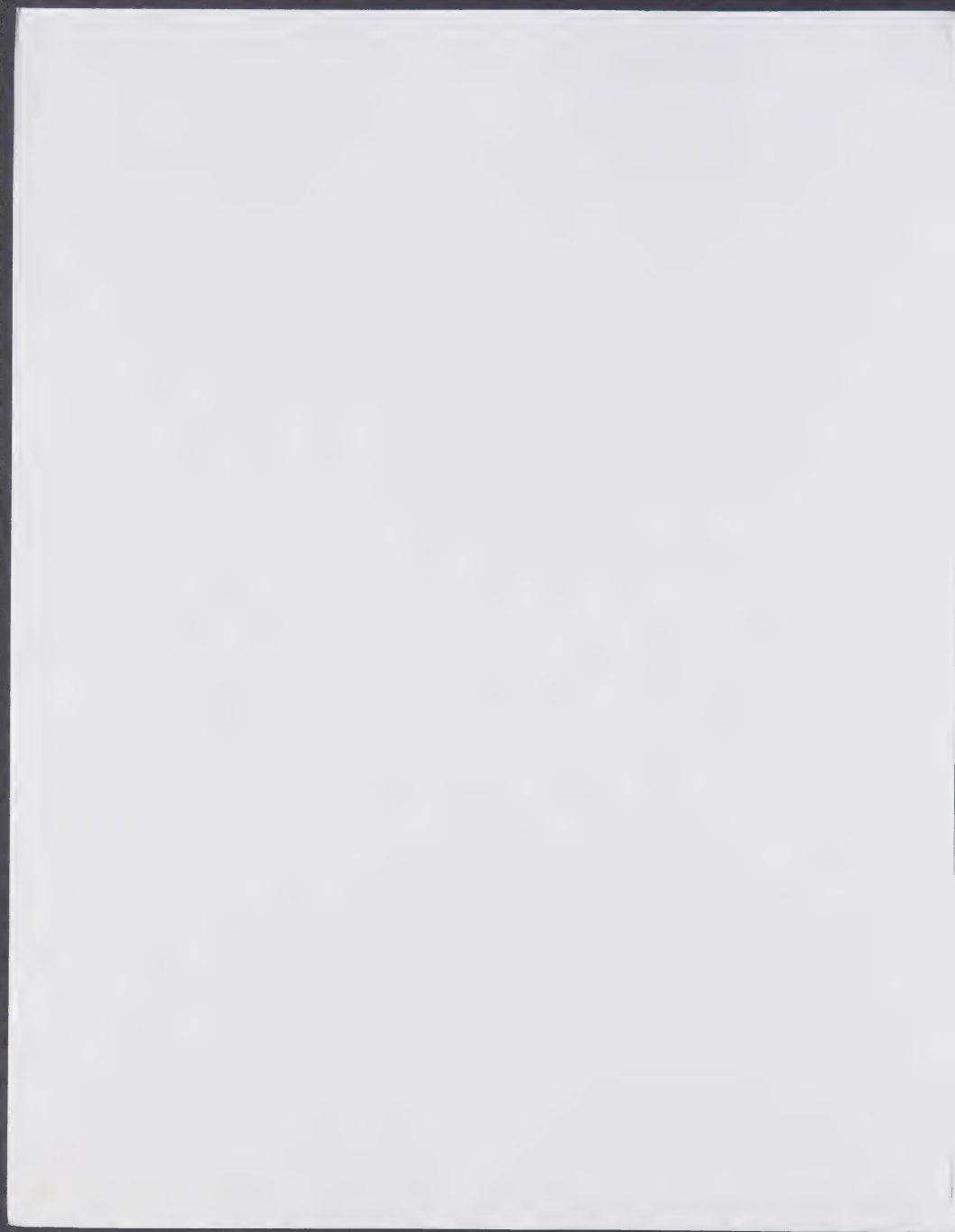
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# SIMON PIETERSZ VERELST

1644-1721

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by

FRANK LEWIS

*Author of Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Flower  
& Still-life Painters, Benjamin Williams Leader, R.A., etc.*

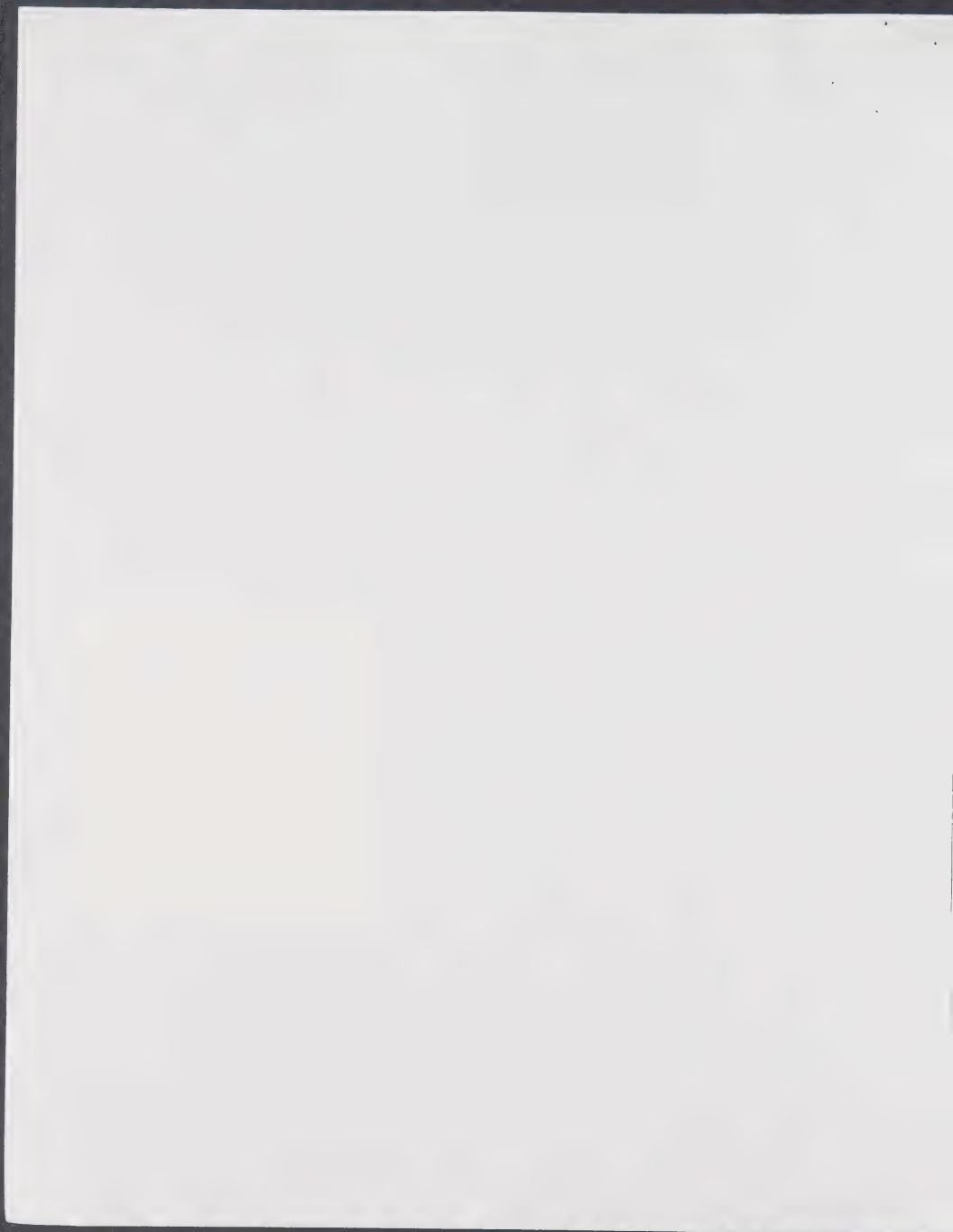


biography on  
Verelst

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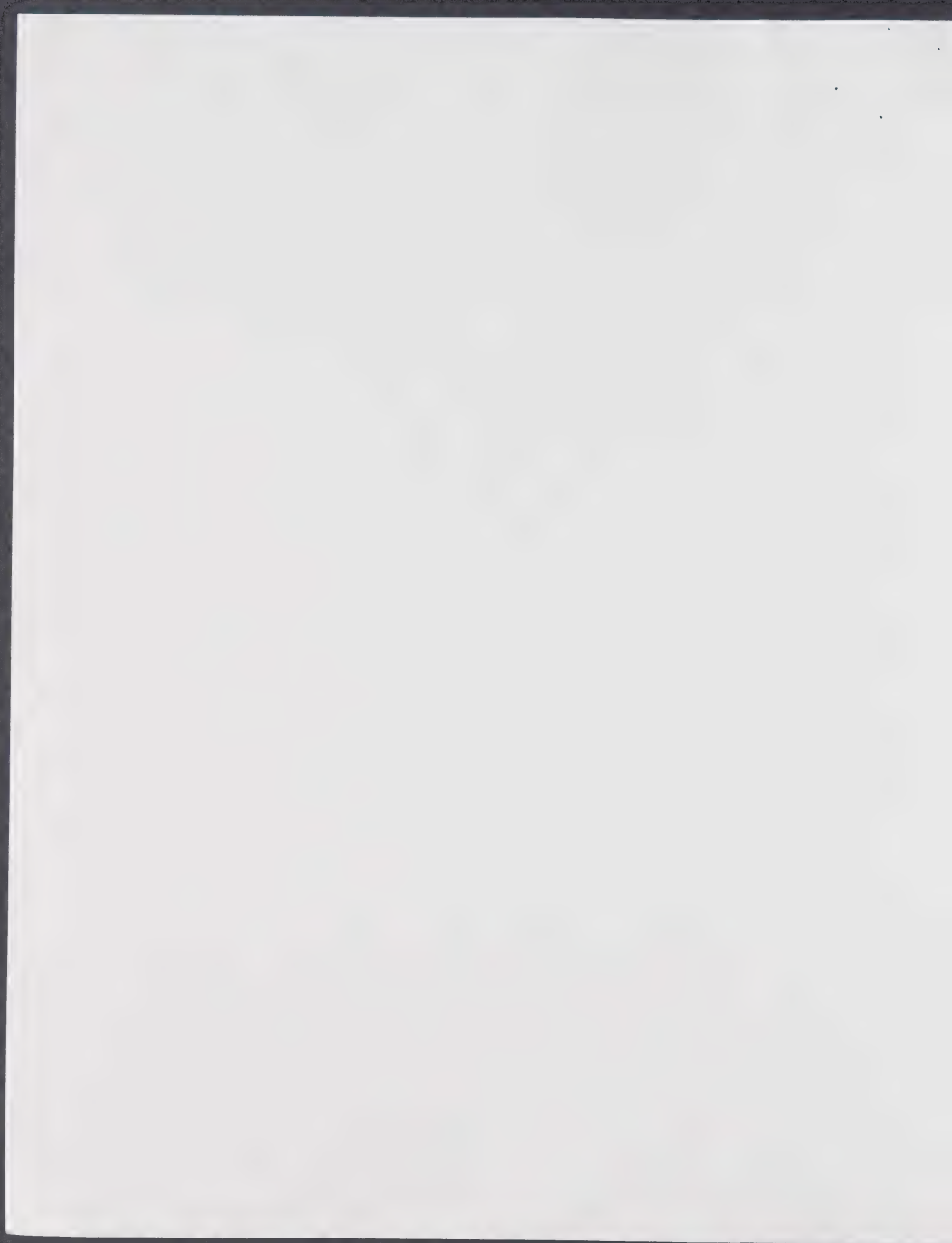
## Preface



**I**N FLOWER PAINTING there is a great gulf placed between its supreme Masters and those of ordinary calibre, a gulf greater and more abrupt than in any other of the Arts. The reason is that in order to achieve supremacy this type of artist must be perfect in the delineation of subjects known to every eye, yet undoubtedly the most difficult of technical execution of any in existence. The slightest error in drawing, colour and texture will be inevitably detected by 'the meanest observer', for who does not know the characteristics of a rose or a tulip, and will not be visually offended by any falsification of the same. Yet, to repeat, the exact representation of these little miracles of nature is almost in itself a miracle, so elusive are the tints, so complex

the perspective and contours, so variant the substance of even the simplest flower of the field. And, of course, over and above all this, the painter of flowers has to invent a composition for the amorphous bundle of blooms heaped on his studio table. From this he designs to form a *picture*, a group or pattern pleasing to the eye, regardless of its components, yet pledged to exhibit each of them to the best advantage. Such, at least, was the aim and inspiration of the famous Masters of yore. It is the habit, or pose, of the moderns to disregard their precepts, and to offer to us their flowers as untidily as they receive them, beautifully painted often but with none of the compositional elegance of their seventeenth and eighteenth century predecessors. This may or may not be considered a decadent practice, technically it has often, (as with Fantin-Latour, the protagonist of floral arrangement) so much superiority as is assignable to the greater variety of modern pigments. But it is certainly so divergent from the ancient practice as to speak in a different language; so that it is best to comply with the sixth of King Charles' 'Twelve Good Rules' which enjoins us 'to make no comparisons'. The great Masters of flower-painting, then, are few indeed. In all the history of art they number less than fifty. Yet to select some half-dozen from this number is like pulling a mere posy from a bouquet of fine blooms, making amends, however, in the beauty of the resulting bunch.

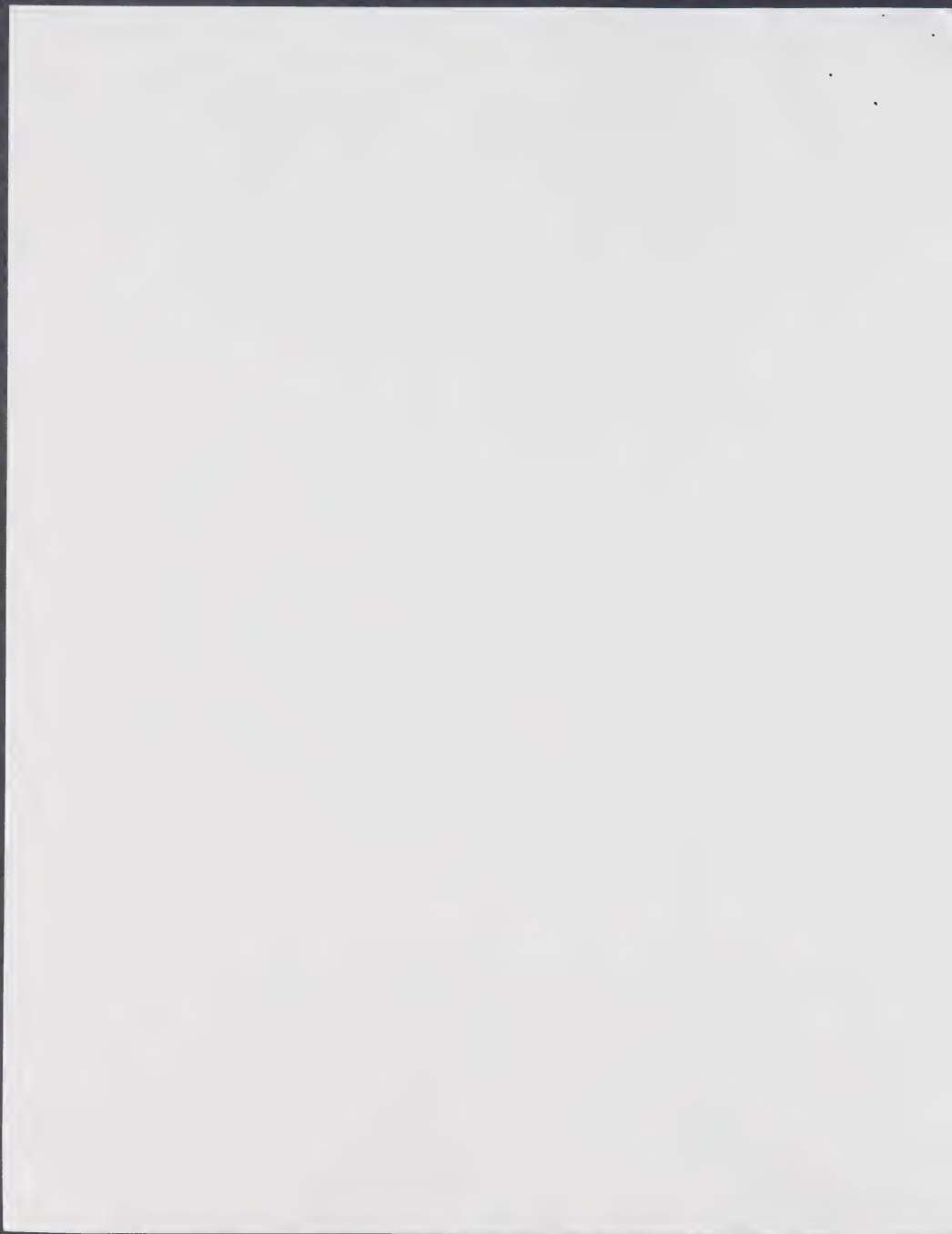
We are about to examine in this book, in a manner not possible in a general treatise, the work of Simon Pietersz Verelst on a scale never attempted before, and to append such statistics as suffice to acquaint the student or connoisseur with the details of a great craftsman known hitherto only in general terms. In biography, it must be confessed, these details will be sparse enough. Painters, painters of flowers especially, have never been sufficiently in the public eye to attract the attention of contemporary *Who's Who's*. They have lived and laboured in solitude 'to fortune and to fame unknown' until Peter Pindar's 'wait till thou hast been dead a hundred years' has disinterred them to the



terrifying cost of would-be purchasers.\* So seldom do we hear of them in their lifetime that the amusing little tourney of Samuel Pepys with Verelst is almost the sole flash of light that has been thrown on any old painter of flowers. But by their works ye shall know them, or one of them, in the illustrations in this volume. Regarding which it may be stated, that of all the pictorial arts, flower painting lends itself best to faithful reproduction, that is to say, if this be undertaken regardless of expense and entrusted only to master hands. Paintings of flowers appeal almost entirely to the eye, it is a chief reason of their universal popularity; and to the eye there is mighty little difference between the originals and the superb simulacra of them in the plates rendered possible by the marvellous technique of the modern colour-printer. Framed and hung on the wall they would deceive, and have deceived the elect, and even the loss of that all-important but elusive quality called *Quality* is not too apparent. A close approximation, therefore, of the merits of every work may have been seen, and it is no small boon to connoisseurs who lack the hundreds or thousands of pounds sterling necessary to acquire the originals, even when originals are procurable. First-rate flower pictures are of the utmost scarcity 'on the market', and become daily more rare as the public Galleries and a few wealthy collectors absorb the scanty supply. To become really acquainted with them a man must range the capitals and collections of Europe; to which end the locations embodied in these pages will be of service.

Connoisseurship in flower pictures is of course a speciality, and one of great refinement. But there is no being more happy than the specialist in any branch of art or science, or indeed in anything on earth, for any moment may put into his hand or his head some item long desired or entirely new to him. Nor is there any investigator more valuable, for to the specialist alone we owe the genuine knowledge of any given subject whatsoever. And what a Golconda await such a one who wishes to perfect himself in the history and aspect of floral art. He will have to travel, as has been said, but every halt will bring him fresh knowledge and new delight, until the catalogues and his own notes will have made him master of his subject. Then, and perhaps not until then, he may look around for specimens for himself. Where? Anywhere! Omitting such obvious sources as the dealers and auction-rooms (though the latter may often provide a neglected treasure to the discerning eye) there is no obscure corner in the streets of Europe which may not harbour a masterpiece, probably almost invisible through dirt, in which state no painting appears more contemptible than a flower-picture, and negligible in price. There is record of a *Van Os* rescued from a street stall in our East-end of London, of a *De Heem* from an old-clothes shop in Liverpool, of a *Marcellus* in use as a fire-screen in a tenement in Mechelin these are but a few of such salvages, though lucky discoverers mostly keep anecdotes of their windfalls to themselves! There is a certain bashfulness in recounting how the value of pounds was acquired for pence, and indeed a less certain dubiety in integrity. Is, or is not a man entitled to take advantage of a discerning eye and of hardly-won knowledge?

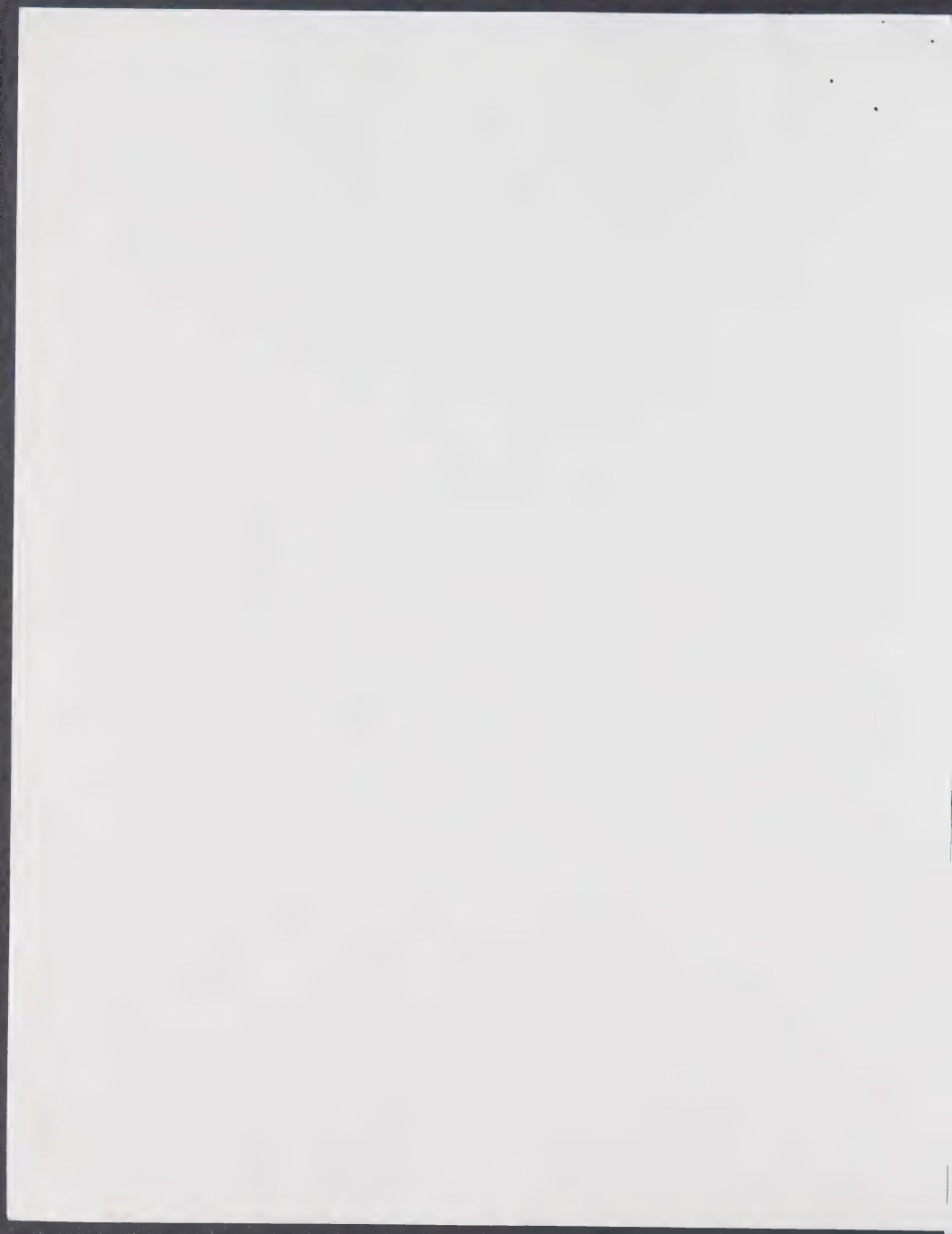
\* His apostrophe to Richard Wilson.



The answer must be left to the ethicicians, and more safely to human nature! At any rate a hero is he who insisted on paying a thousand pounds instead of the five asked from him for a parcel of drawings by Raphael, an authentic occurrence, and one which is unlikely to find many counterparts in this our Vale. Connoisseurship and collectorship are almost inseparable terms. It is incredible that any man who unearthed a pictorial (or any other type of) treasure, should refrain from acquiring it because the price asked is too low. Actually his purchase performs an act of justice, inasmuch as it restores to a place in the sun, an item resulting from a lifetime of labour, deserving a better fate than immolation in the cellar of a junk shop. But such debateable topics are outside our realms of reference, and are only introduced since they may well arise in the course of the odyssey of any connoisseur. We are concerned here only with the existence of Simon Pietersz Verelst, and where the beauty of his productions may be seen and enjoyed.

It is a common error to class paintings of flowers as purely objects of 'decoration'. Decorative, of course they are, and in the highest degree. No pictures of any other kind so instantly beautify a wall, and hence a room, and none more perfectly 'go' with fine furniture or elegant hangings. This may suffice for many people, though a costly enough venture in mere ornament. 'Just another flower picture', mumbles the Squire quoted by James Smetham, 'so the gentleman passes on to the next on the wall'. But he may have wandered past a work of art, and a supreme one if the painting be by one of the masters. It may, indeed, be the finest thing in all the house or the gallery; but it will take more than a glance and a momentary pause to perceive it. It will require, moreover, an eye of some culture, not indeed to discriminate the verisimilitude of the several blooms represented (for the perception of that is almost common property), but to discern the exquisite art and technique which has compounded so many forms and tints into a harmony, into a *picture* not a mere illustration. How little credit do artists of any kind receive for their artistry, 'I am a painter too', said George Moore, 'a painter in words, not in colour', being irritated that the appreciation of his tales was so wide and their brilliant English so exiguous. Too often the painter of flowers might make the similar complaint that the perfection of his workmanship passes unobserved even by the majority of those who nevertheless pore delightedly over his blooms. The reward of both author and artist is, of course, the admiration of a few 'superior persons'; with regard to whom it should be recognised that the last thing those desire is to *be* 'superior'. No one expends more time and labour than they, in books, in lectures, in exhibitions, in the endeavour to enable others to share with them the true and full delight of Fine Art, namely the technical and artistic language in which it is in print, in paint, or in musical notation. They are not, it is true, very successful, and the stigma of 'highbrow' is too often applied to such instructors; but to anyone who learns from them has been added something which will remain a life-long acquisition, as precious as a sixth sense.

If Simon Verelst did not actually attain to the topmost rung of the ladder of Flower-painting, he climbed nearly to it. What little denied him the summit are, first, a general

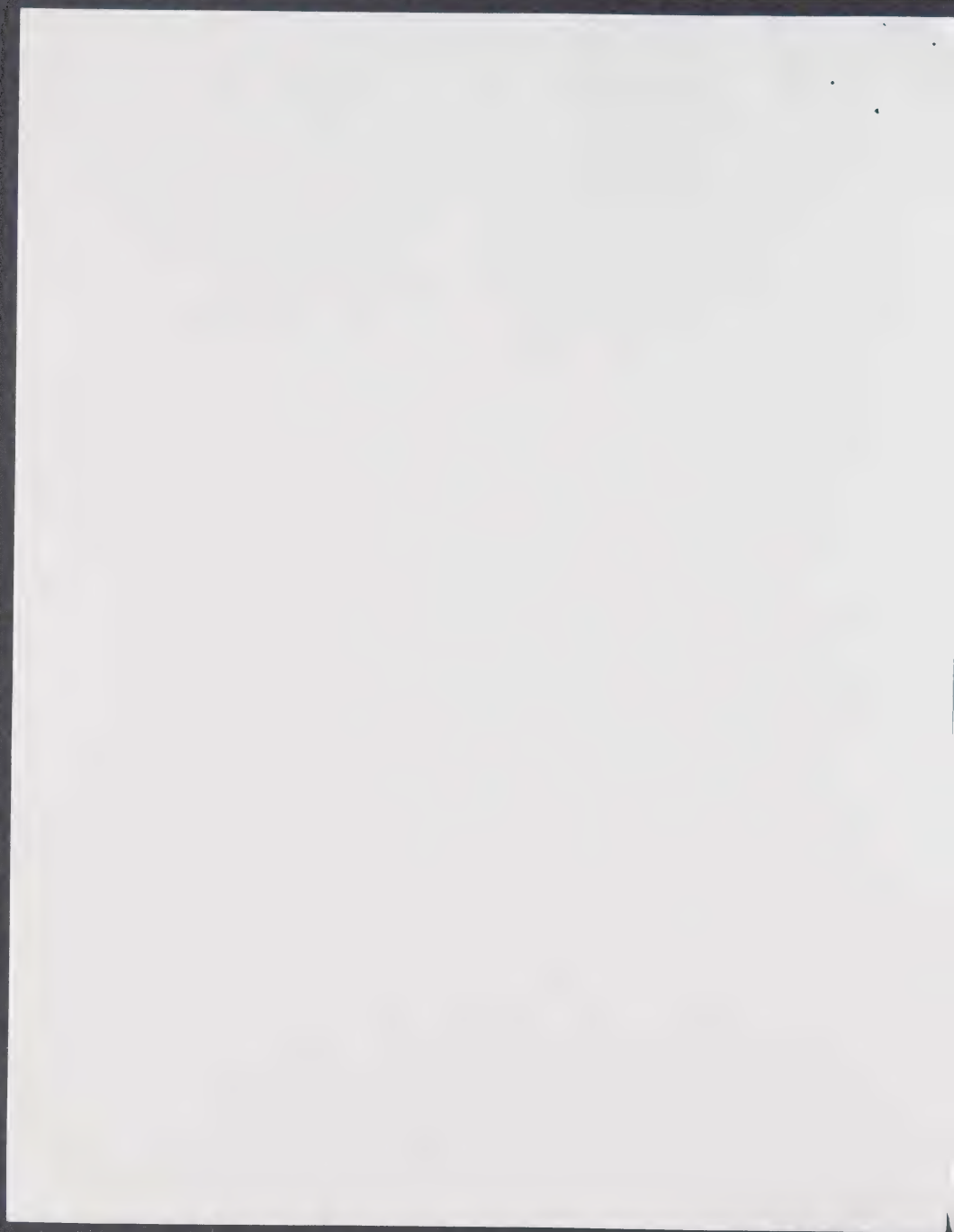


sombreness of tone, which causes his bouquets to appear as though seen in the twilight, secondly, a choice of tinting somewhat less immaculate than with the highest masters of the art. Besides Jan van Huysum, for example, he looks dull; besides Rachel Ruysch, a craftsman rather than a genius. Comparisons may be 'odious', but they are inevitable in the realm of painting, indeed the only possible yardsticks with which to measure the dimensions of this talent and that. If, then, there are some few who are finer painters than Verelst, nevertheless he is fine enough to be counted amongst the Masters. To some, even the 'inspissated gloom' which pervades his panels (he worked often on wood) may be an actual attraction, for there is a 'crepuscular school' of connoisseurs as well as of painters, to whom 'the leaf that is darkish and has prickles on it',\* an exact description of much of the work of Verelst, is more congenial than the most brilliant blaze of colour. Not that there is any clumsy indistinctness in the details of his work, his dimly-glowing bouquets, his golden urns standing on tables of sun-flecked limestone. Certainly, no old paintings of this *genre* require more thorough but more careful cleaning to reveal what is in them than those of this artists; or will better repay it. Often, especially in his backgrounds, there lurks a 'something, nothing' which emerge as passages of sheer beauty when cleaned from their obscurity by dirt or old varnish.

Verelst well knew the limitations, or, if you will, the virtues of his deliberately chosen technique. Unlike most of his time and trade he forbore to variegate his solemn canvas with 'accidents', such as the ornamental landscapes, architecture or insects, reptiles, shells, and so on, which usually and delightfully enliven the paintings of his predecessors and contemporaries. He rarely allows himself more than a single butterfly, and that the most unobtrusive; more often he admits no such amusement at all. He may be said, in short, to rely like the best of dramatists on the unities, keeping his hero of polychromatic blossoms solitary and apart against a background of vibrant obscurity. There is much art in this, even some sort of the *stigmata* of great art. In other and higher branches masterpieces have been wrought with this same technical theory and practice of Simon Verelst. Applied to flowers it may be considered perhaps too austere and lacking the commanding 'Look there' † which is the chief claim to attention by most paintings of blooms. But assuredly it results in works-of-art, and on this may rest securely the reputation of Simon Pietersz Verelst.

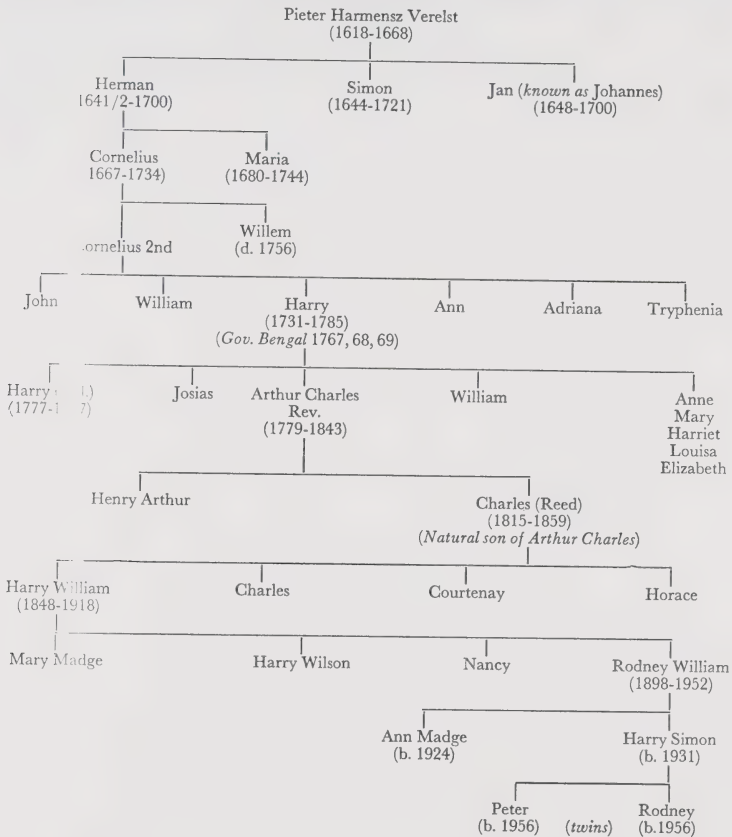
\* Milton's *Comus*.

† John Varley's dictum as a necessity in all pictures.

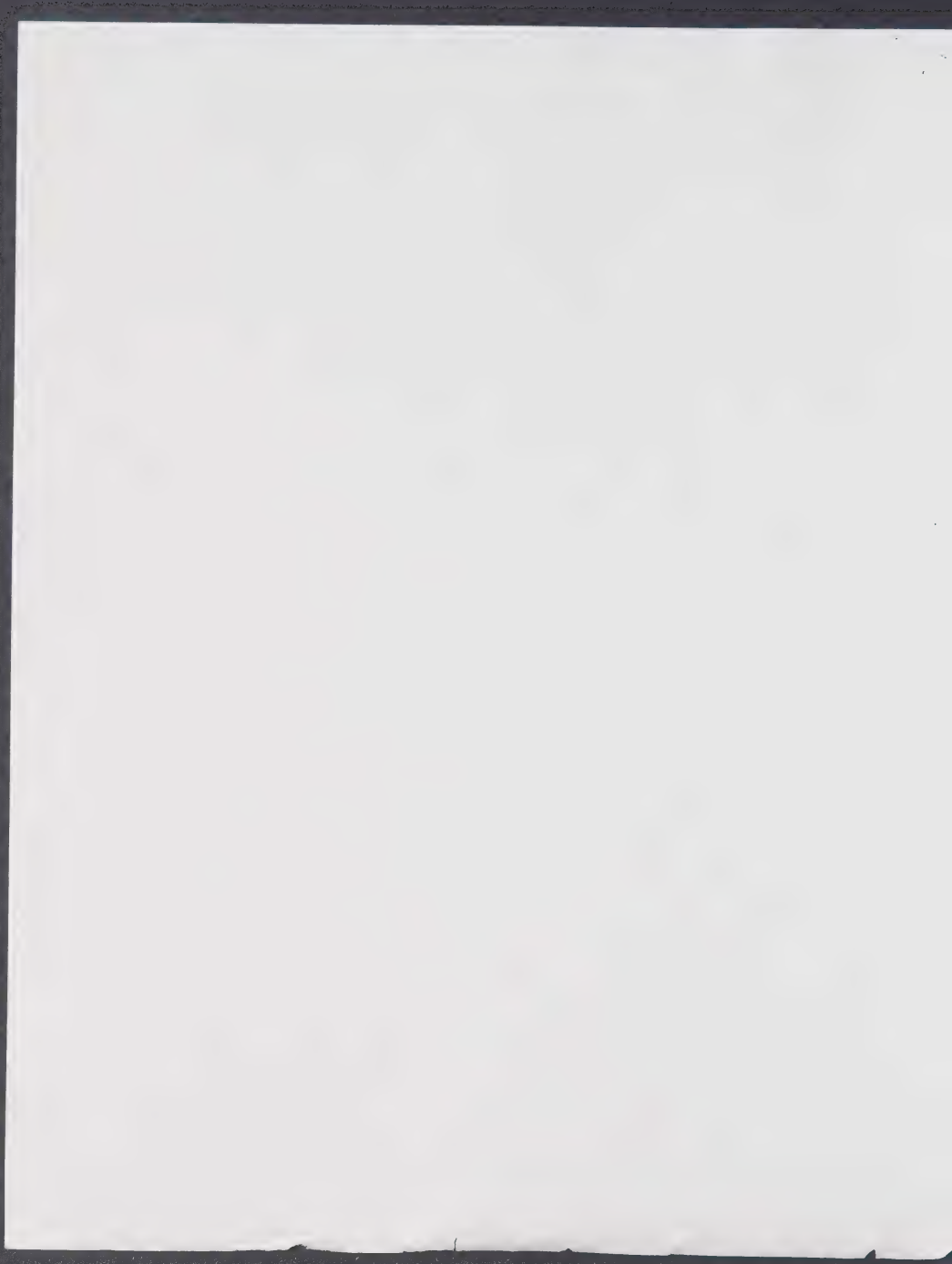




# Verelst Family Tree



N.B. The descent is through the male line with the surname Verelst constant.



indeed a pair, an observation that is supported by their provenance and measurements, and also by the similar materials and technique employed in both works. Verelst painted in a large variety of formats, but there are hardly two extant pictures of the same size. Only the fruit still-life is dated, and as such is his only surviving dated fruit piece. The flower picture is an example dating from Verelst's best period, i.e., his early years in England, most of his few dated works were painted during this period<sup>6</sup>. His later production is characterized by less movement and in general the contours become more pronounced. Verelst's execution also became less meticulous. The glass vase in the flower piece contains the following species<sup>7</sup>:

African Marigold (bottom center) *Tagetes patula*  
Whitish Pink Rose (bottom left) *Rosa provincialis*  
*x R. alba*

Peony (overhanging) *Paeonia officinalis salmonea plena*

Snowball (center) *Viburnum opulus cv. Roseum*

Tulip (left) *Tulipa schrenkii x T. bifora*

German Flag (top left) *Iris germanica*

Opium Poppy (top) *Papaver somniferum fimbriatum plenum*

Pot Marigold (top, behind) *Calendula officinalis*

Rosa Mundi (bottom right and) *Rosa gallica*

*cv. Versicolor*

on the table-top)

Butterflies:

a. Blue (bottom left) *Polyommatus icarus*

b. Red Admiral (bottom right) *Vanessa atalanta*

The fruit piece presents us with two sorts of grapes, a melon, a peach, cherries and red and white currants; in a white earthenware bowl are Seville oranges, blackberries and grapes, and on the gleaming pewter plate lies a split peach. There are several butterflies: above is a Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) in flight, on a vine leaf in the center a Large White (*Pieris brassicae*), and on the peach leaf at the bottom is a Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*). Again, pink and reddish tints are much in evidence. By and large, the composition follows the S-shaped line of the flower piece, with the hanging cluster of grapes at the bottom left and the vine-leaves at the top right. In order to achieve this effect, the table-top is situated higher than in the flower piece, leaving ample room for the signature. The desiccated leaves of the peach and

of the vine leaf in the middle, its veins turning yellow, are beautifully rendered. In contrast to this effort Van Aelst painted relatively simple fruit pieces throughout his career, beginning merely with a cluster of fruit lying on a stone ledge, and occasionally adding a pewter plate<sup>8</sup>. In comparing our fruit piece with those of Willem van Aelst, for instance a work of 1670<sup>9</sup>, we see the S-shaped construction to be a translation of his flower pieces, and not of his fruit pieces.

Undoubtedly, Simon Verelst was concerned first and foremost with the decorative value of his artistic production. However, he did not neglect the traditional symbolic content and this observation is borne out by a number of early flower pieces with a watch, which in turn relate to earlier paintings by Van Aelst. In these florals by Verelst, the rose leaves are very withered indeed. A similar Verelst fruit piece, placed in front of a landscape bathed in evening light, may also have connotations of transience<sup>10</sup>. If our flower and fruit pieces are actually intended as a pair depicting the seasons, it should be borne in mind that the potential seasonal aspects refer only to the flowers and fruit depicted and not to the cherries and currants, which are early summer fruits at a time when the peony is in bloom; and butterflies are usually past their prime by the time that grapes are ripe. We are reminded of Jan van Huysum, who composed his complicated bouquets of flowers that bloomed at different times of the year, thus creating an image that could never exist in reality.

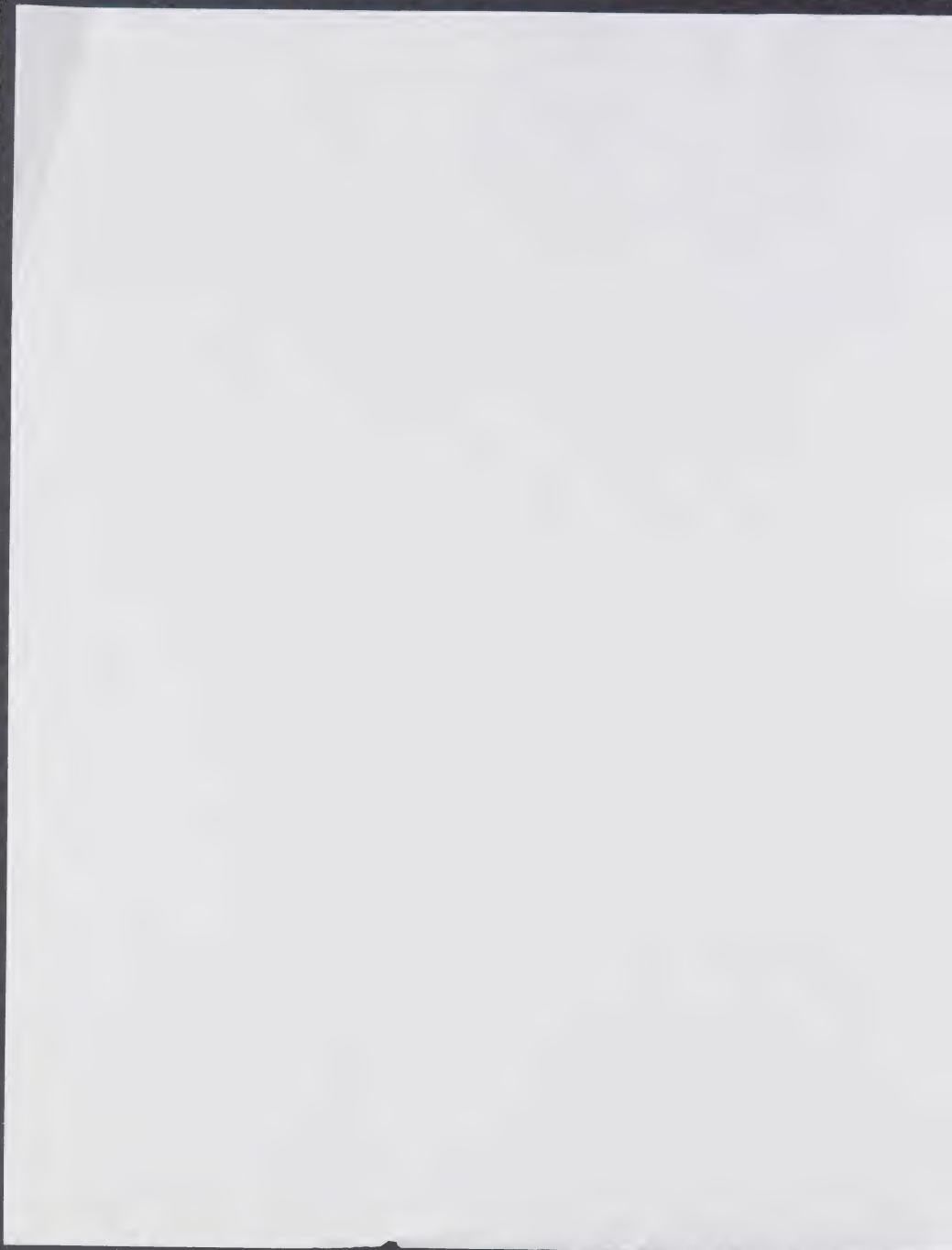
REMARKS: An unsigned copy or version exists of each work, differing in detail. The repetition of the flower piece was at the Waterman Gallery, Amsterdam in 1980: canvas, 56 x 45 cm., catalogue *Niederländische Stillleben des 17. Jahrhunderts* (exhibition in Munich), illustrated; the other fruit piece was in a sale at Sotheby's, London, 26 October 1988, no. 116, canvas, 52 x 41 1/2 cm.

Sam Segal

PROVENANCE: Private Collection, United States.

EXHIBITION: Osaka, Natio Museum of Art, Tokyo, Tokyo Station Gallery, and Sydney, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Flowers and Nature - Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries*, 1990, nos. 56 and 57, reproduced.

LITERATURE: Sam Segal, 1990, pp. 106-107, 224-225 (see exhibition); Walter Liedtke, "Pepsy and the Pictorial Arts", in *Apollo*, 138/350, April, 1991, pp. 230-231, fig. 11.



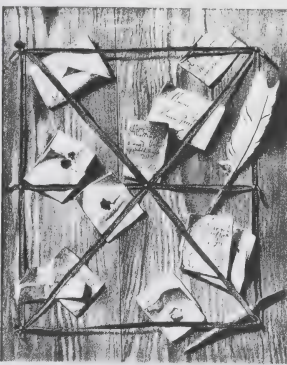
a book upon a desk which I durst sworn was a real book'. His taste remains the same on 15 March 1668, when a friend shows him 'several things painted on a deal Board'. The small paintings, perhaps of still-life motifs (Fig. 4), were so wonderfully done that Pepys is 'troubled that so good pictures should be painted upon a piece of bad deale', but then he learns that 'it was not board, but only the picture of a board'.

Similarly, when Pepys saw a flower still life by Simon Verelst (see Plate II) and Verelst himself in the house of 'Loton the landskip-drawer' (Jan Looton, c. 1618–1681; in London by July, 1662), the 'little flower pott [with] drops of Dew hanging on the leaves' compelled Pepys 'again and again to put my finger to it and feel whether my eyes were deceived' (11 April 1669). Verelst wanted seventy pounds for the picture, and Pepys 'had the vanity to bid him 20!—but a better picture I never saw in my whole life, and it is worth going twenty miles to see'.

In the 1650s and 1660s illusionistic pictures and especially 'perspectives' were associated with the revelations of optical instruments such as the camera obscura, and the broader question of how the eye sees. This, at least, is the impression that some scholars have received from studying artists such as Carel Fabritius and his former fellow student Samuel van Hoogstraten, from writers on art such as Van Hoogstraten himself, from authors of perspective treatises such as Samuel Marolois, and from the diaries of dilettantes such as Constantijn Huygens.<sup>6</sup> A few entries in Pepys's *Diary* strengthen the connection between Pepys's reactions and contemporary scientific ideas. In the same years that Van Hoogstraten, Vermeer, and many other Dutch painters were employing artificial perspective schemes with new (though not unprecedented) enthusiasm, Pepys was fascinated by the discourse of William, Lord Brouncker (first president of the Royal Society) on 'the principles of Optickes... And that it is not the eye at all, or any rule of optiques, that can tell distance, but it is only an act of reason, comparing one mark with another. Which did both please and inform me mightily', as Pepys records on 28 July 1666. The next day he has two prominent makers of optical instruments to a mid-day meal at home, John Sprong and Richard Reeve, the latter lens maker to the king:

After dinner to our business of my Microscope... and then down to my office to look in a dark room with my glasses and Tube, and most excellently things appeared indeed, beyond imagination. This was our work all the afternoon, trying the several glasses and several objects, among others, one of my plats [maps], where the lines appeared so very plain.

Pepys had purchased a microscope and a form of camera obscura, perhaps the 'Tube' with various lenses, from Reeve on 13 August 1664. The tube was called a 'Scotoscope... and is of value; and a curious curiosity it is to [see] objects in a dark room with'. Pepys took the instruments home and then



4 A trompe-l'œil still life of letters by Wallerand Vaillant (1623–77), 1658. Oil on canvas, 51.5 × 41.5 cm. Sotheby's, New York (10 January 1991). Illusionistic 'letter racks' were painted by Vaillant, Edwaert Collier, Samuel van Hoogstraten and other artists active in the 1660s. c. 1991 Sotheby's Inc.

'read a little in Dr Powre's book of discovery by the Microscope'. The mention of the microscope together with the camera obscura in several passages of the *Diary* recalls Vermeer's presumed relationship with Anthony van Leeuwenhouck, the famous microscopist, Delft citizen, and trustee of the painter's estate.<sup>7</sup>

Earlier in 1666, on 21 February, Pepys was told by Lord Brouncker 'about [the] art of drawing pictures by Prince Roberts's [Prince Rupert, first cousin of Charles II] rule and machine, and another of Dr Wren's; but he says nothing doth like Squares, or, which is the best in the world, like a dark room—which pleased me mightily'.

Brouncker was comparing the 'drawing frame' or 'perspective frame', consisting of a sight and a grid of strings stretched in a frame, with the camera obscura as a tracing device. Three years later Pepys noted 'the instrument for perspective made by Dr Wren, of which I have one making by [John] Browne' (30 April 1669); on 8 May 1669, 'comes Browne the Mathematical-instrument maker, and brings me home my instrument for Perspective, made according to the description of Dr Wren's in the late *Transactions*'.<sup>8</sup> Various perspective frames of practical design were published in Marolois's *Perspective* of 1628 (Fig. 5) and appear to have been employed by a few Dutch painters, as has been maintained in the case of Gerard Houckgeest's remarkably faithful interior views of the churches in Delit.<sup>9</sup>

Messrs Reeve and Sprong were again at Pepys's house on 19 August 1666, for talk 'upon Opticke enquiries'. One of them brought 'a frame with closes [small holes with shutters?] on, to see how the Rays of light do cut one another... He did also bring a [magic] lantern, with pictures in glass to make strange things appear on a wall, very pretty'.<sup>10</sup> The company also used Pepys's '12-foot glass' to study 'Jupiter and his girdle and Satellites', but Saturn was too dark to see. After the evening's entertainment Pepys had the good sense to complain in his *Diary* that he understood nothing from Reeve about 'the nature and reason' of lenses, because Reeve himself understood 'the acting part but not one bit the theory... which is a strange dullness methinks'. It was actually a common dullness, to judge from remarks in perspective treatises and other diaries of the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup>

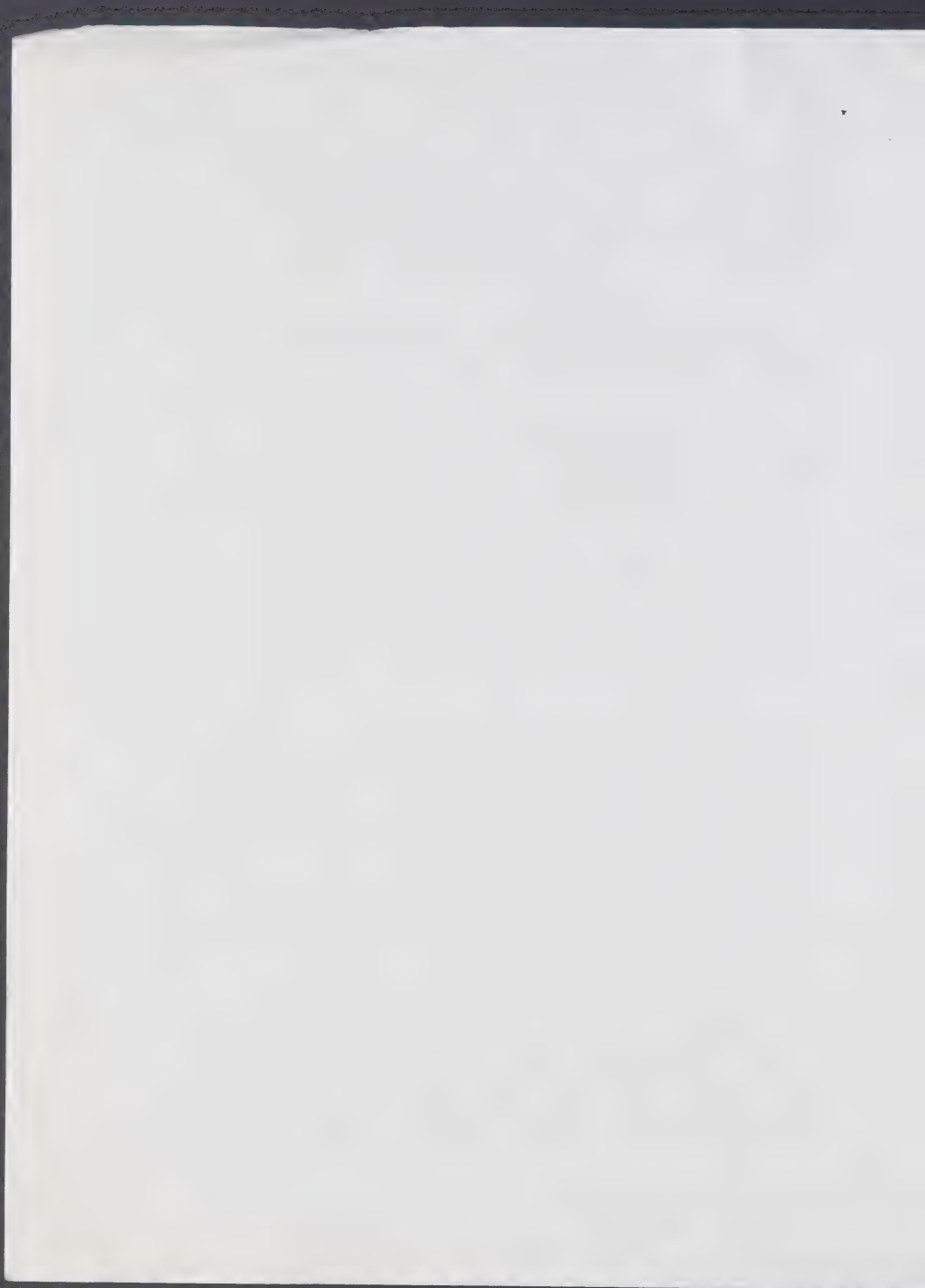
Pepys went to Reeve's on 13 July 1668, 'and there saw some, and bespoke a little, perspective—and was mightily pleased with seeing objects in a dark room'. The 'perspective' may have been a 'perspective glass' of some sort, not a picture. But a 'perspective' hangs in the hallway outside Pepys's library (Fig. 6), an interior view of a barrel-vaulted

II An opium poppy and other flowers in a glass vase, by Simon Verelst (1644–1721), 1672. Oil on canvas, 54.5 × 44 cm. Private collection (courtesy Otto Naumann Ltd., New York). A pendant canvas, depicting fruit on a stone table, is dated 1672, and both canvases are signed. Verelst asked seventy pounds for such a picture when Pepys met him on 11 April 1669.

Your Flower ptg.  
Nicely published  
by Walter Liedtke  
in Apollo.

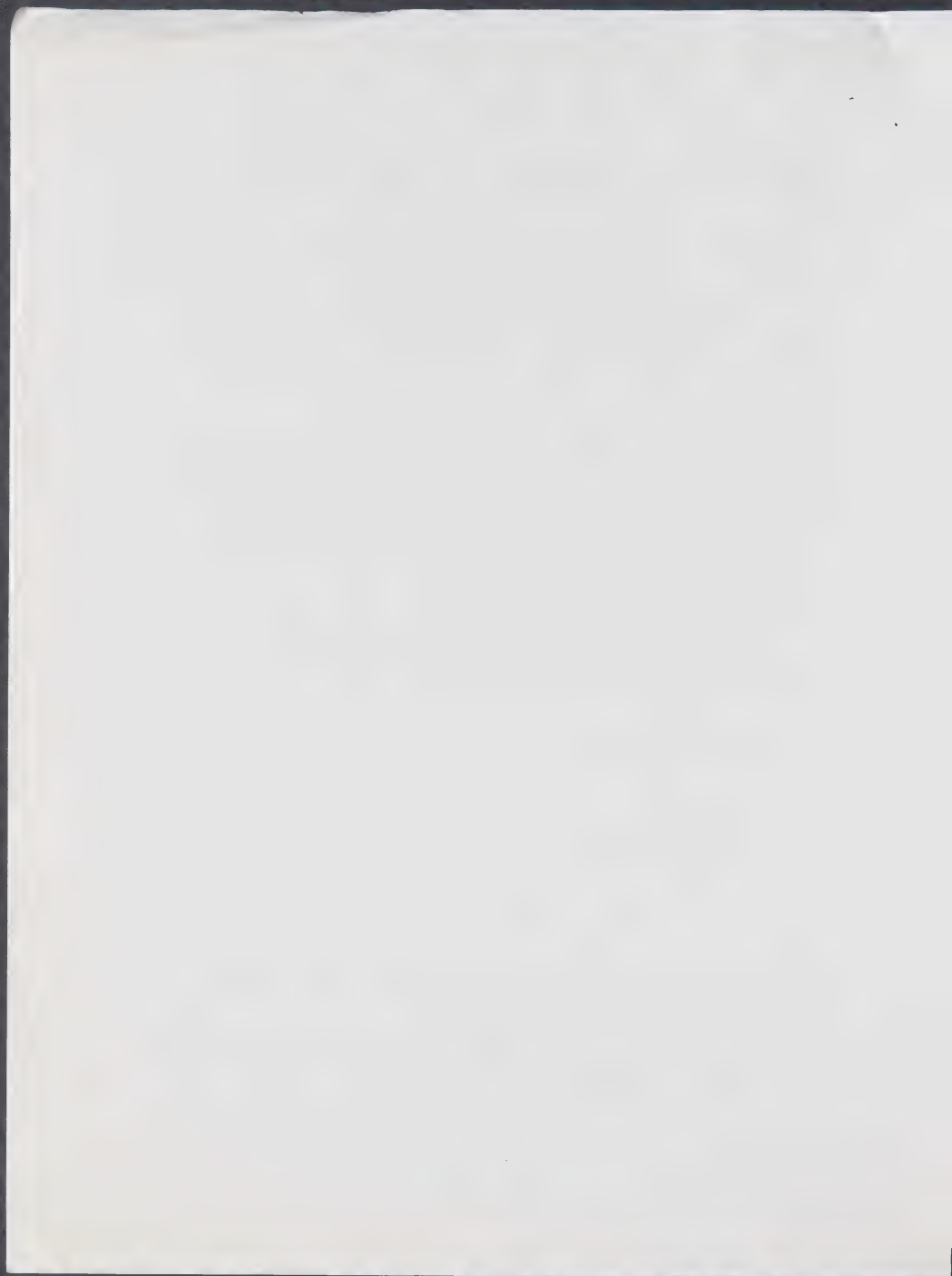
Apr. 2 1991











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**INVOICE:** 4 November 1996

Dr. Alfred Bader  
Alfred Bader Fine Arts  
Astor Hotel - Suite 622  
924 East Juneau Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

For the following paintings:

**SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST** (The Hague 1644 - 1721 London )

*An Opium Poppy and other Flowers in a glass Vase*  
and  
*Fruit on a stone Table*

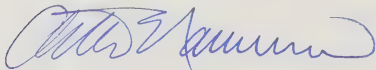
the first indistinctly signed at bottom right in black: *S. Verelst Fecit*; and the second signed and dated at bottom right in beige: *Si. Verelst F a 1672*  
Both, oil on canvas, 21 1/2 x 17 1/4 inches (54 1/2 x 44 cm.)

**TOTAL:** **\$275,000.00**

Please pay the amount indicated by check.

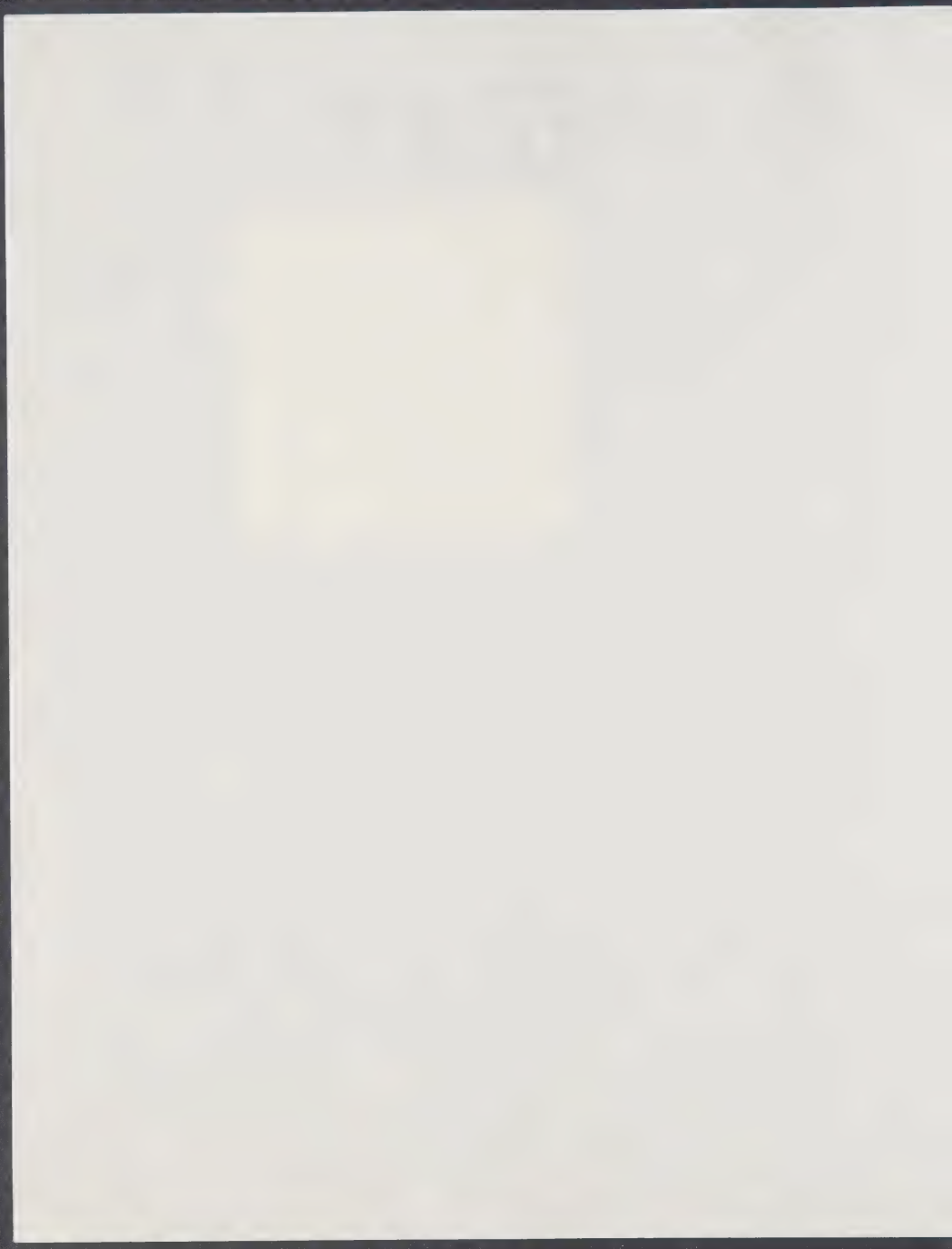
I hereby guarantee the authenticity of the above work of art against its individual purchase price. Title transfers automatically upon receipt of full and valid payment.

Sincerely yours,



Otto Naumann

Alfred -  
my file invoice is  
this, since I decided  
to take none the fruit  
picture and take a  
paper loss.  
Just between us.  
Yours, Otto





STILL LIFE STUDIES

Dr S. Segal  
Prinsengracht 851  
1017 KB Amsterdam  
Tel. (020) 23 87 48  
FAX 278 478

Dr. Otto Naumann  
4 East 74th Street  
USA - New York - New York 10021  
FAX 09-1-212-535 0617

17-1-1990

Dear Otto,

I hope this will not alarm you:

Although I have no doubt that the Verelst fruit piece is genuine and by Verelst (judging from reproductions), I wonder if it really is a companion to the flower piece. An identical fruit piece, or the same one? was sold at Sotheby's, London, on 26 October 1988, no. 116, for £ 14.850. It was illustrated on the cover, unsigned, canvas, as 52 x 41½ cm. The reproduction shows several differences, e.g., a butterfly on the wing upper left, two small beetles (?) and virus spots on the vine leaf, and water drops on the poppy leaf. Could you have a careful look, and inform if it really is another version? I could imagine that the butterfly has been added later, and taken away recently, it looks not Verelst-like.

No other flower-fruit-pairs by Verelst are known, there are some flower-flower-pairs (only one completely sure). As to the flower piece: there was another version, probably weaker, at Christie's, London, 29 June 1979, no. 33, and with Waterman, Amsterdam in 1980, illustrated and on the cover of his gallery catalogue in Munich, "Niederländische Stilleben des 17. Jahrhunderts".

If it would turn out that it is not really a pair, would you mind if I would take the flowers only for the exhibition? If it really is a pair, I would be very happy to include them both, I need such an example. This has to be decided soon. Could you anyhow phone me back to-day?

Best regards,

*Sam*

*Comparisons def.  
other pctg. def. a copy!*

Sam Segal wondering  
if they are a  
true pain !!

SAM SEGAL

LOWERS AND NATURE  
HERLANDISH FLOWER PAINTING OF FOUR CENTURIES

*Pair first  
published by  
Sam Segal in  
his exhibition*

Hjnk International b.v., Amstelveen 1990

100



56 SIMON VERELST  
1672

57 SIMON VERELST  
1672

#### SIMON VERELST

Simon Pietersz. Verelst was born in 1644 in The Hague. His father, Pieter Harmensz. Verelst (1618-1668) was a portrait and genre painter who also produced a few still lifes. He probably taught his sons Herman (1641/2-1700) and Simon to paint. In 1663 they were registered in the *Confrérie Pictura* in The Hague, an artists' association. In 1668 or 1669 Simon, Herman and Herman's son Cornelis moved to London, where Pieter's flower pieces and portraits met with great success. King Charles II bought six paintings, and his work was equally in demand among the nobility. It was not long before English poets were singing Simon's praises. His fame spread to Holland; in 1707 Gerard de Laïresse wrote of Verelst as the most celebrated flower painter of all time, ranking him above Daniel Seghers and Jan Davidsz. de Heem.<sup>1</sup> All this seems to have gone to Simon's head. He called himself 'God of Flowers' and 'King of Painting' and generally behaved in an arrogant fashion, ending up in an asylum. Although he recovered his sanity, he failed to regain his earlier fame. He died in London in 1721.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> De Laïresse 1707, vol. 2, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> For an oeuvre catalogue, which contains many misattributions, however: Lewis 1979.



56 and 57  
SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST  
*'s-Gravenhage 1644 - 1721 London*

56 Opium Poppy and other flowers in a glass vase  
57 Fruit on a stone table

Canvas, 54½ × 44 cm, no. 56 indistinctly signed at bottom right in black: *S. Verelst Fecit*; no. 57 signed at bottom right in beige: *Si. Verelst F à 1672*; a pair  
Private collection

*Provenance:* Private collection, United States.

*Remarks:* An unsigned copy or version exists of each work, differing in detail. The flower piece was at the Waterman Gallery, Amsterdam, in 1980: canvas, 56 × 45 cm, catalogue *Niederländische Stilleben des 17. Jahrhunderts* (exhibition in Munich), ill., the fruit piece in a sale at Sotheby's, London, 26 October 1988, no. 116, canvas, 52 × 41½ cm.

The glass vase contains the following species:  
African Marigold (bottom centre)

*Tagetes patula* L.

whitish pink Rose (bottom left)

*Rosa provincialis* .Mill. x *R. alba* L.

Peony (overhanging)

*Paeonia officinalis* L. *salmonea plena*

Snowball (centre)

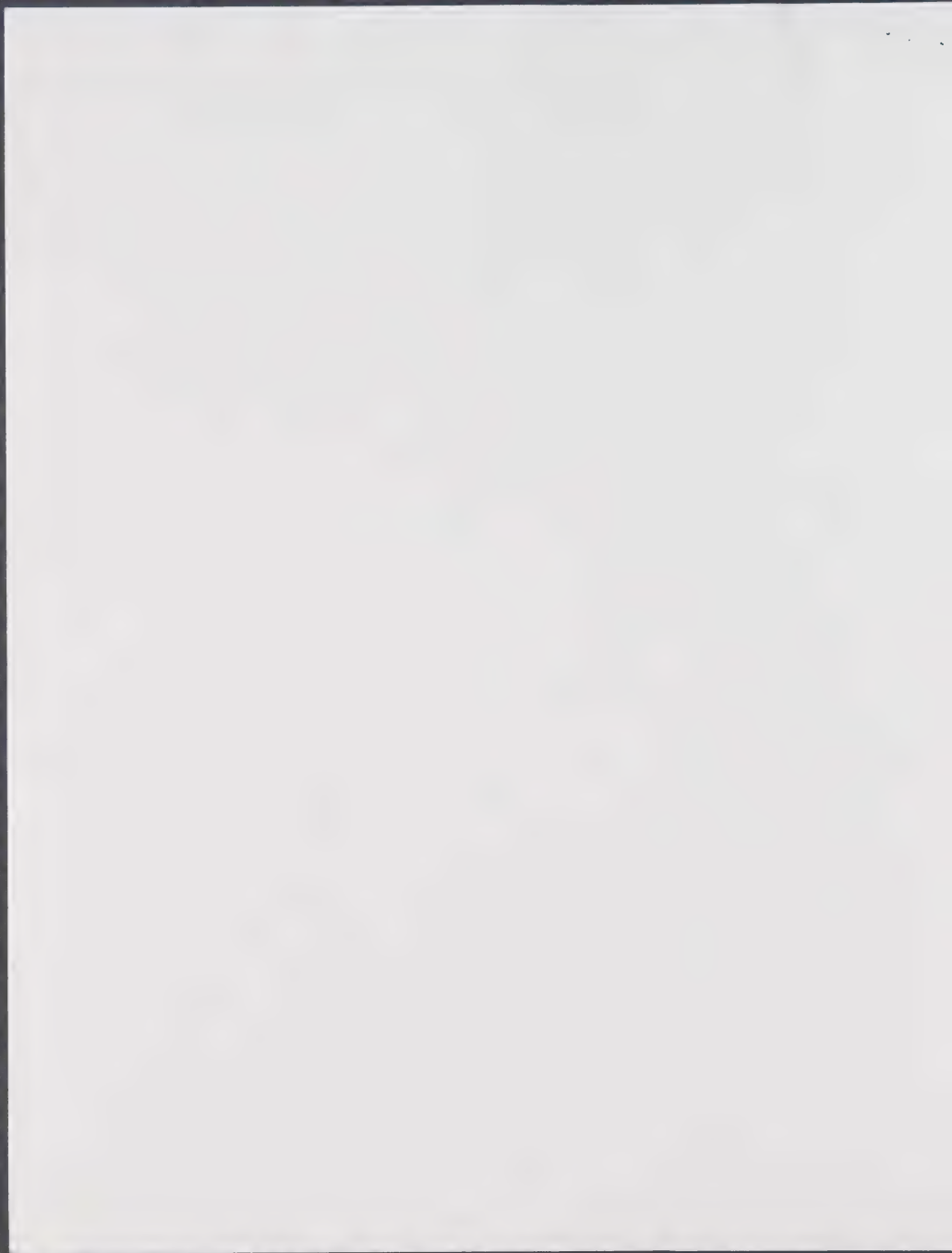
*Viburnum opulus* L. cv. *Roseum*

Tulip (left)

*Tulipa schrenkii* Reg. x *T. biflora* Pall.

German Flag (top left)

*Iris germanica* L.

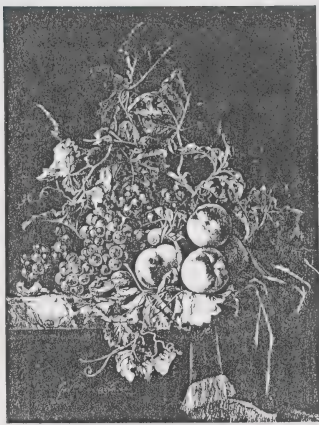


than in the flower piece, leaving room for the signature. The desiccated leaves of the peach and of the vine leaf in the middle, its veins turning yellow, are beautifully done. Van Aelst painted relatively simple fruit pieces from the start of his career, with the fruit lying on a stone ledge. He sometimes added a pewter plate.<sup>5</sup> But on comparing our fruit piece with those of Willem van Aelst, for instance a work of 1670 (fig. 57a),<sup>6</sup> we see the S-shaped construction to be a translation of his flower pieces, and not of his fruit pieces.

Simon Verelst was probably concerned first and foremost with the decorative value. He did not forget the traditional symbolical content, though. This is borne out by a number of early flower pieces with a watch, as in some paintings by Van Aelst (fig. 56a). In these flower pieces of Verelst's, the rose leaves are very withered indeed. A similar Verelst fruit piece, placed in front of a landscape bathed in evening light, may also have connotations of transience.<sup>7</sup> If the flower and fruit pieces really are a pair depicting the seasons, it should be borne in mind that the seasonal aspects only refer to flowers and fruit in general, for cherries and currants are early summer fruits at a time when the peony is in bloom, and butterflies are usually past their prime by the time that grapes are ripe.



56a WILLEM VAN AELST  
1663



57a WILLEM VAN AELST  
1670

1 Segal 1982a, p. 50.

2 Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kassel, inventory no. GK 905, canvas, 55 × 46.3 cm, signed and dated, museum guide 1977, p. 65, ill.

3 Inventory no. 2, canvas, 62 1/2 × 49 cm, signed and dated, museum catalogue 1977, p. 29, ill.; B. Broos, *Meesterwerken in het Mauritshuis*, The Hague 1987, no. 1, ill., with sketch and identifications by S. Segal; Warner 1928, no. 2d, ill.

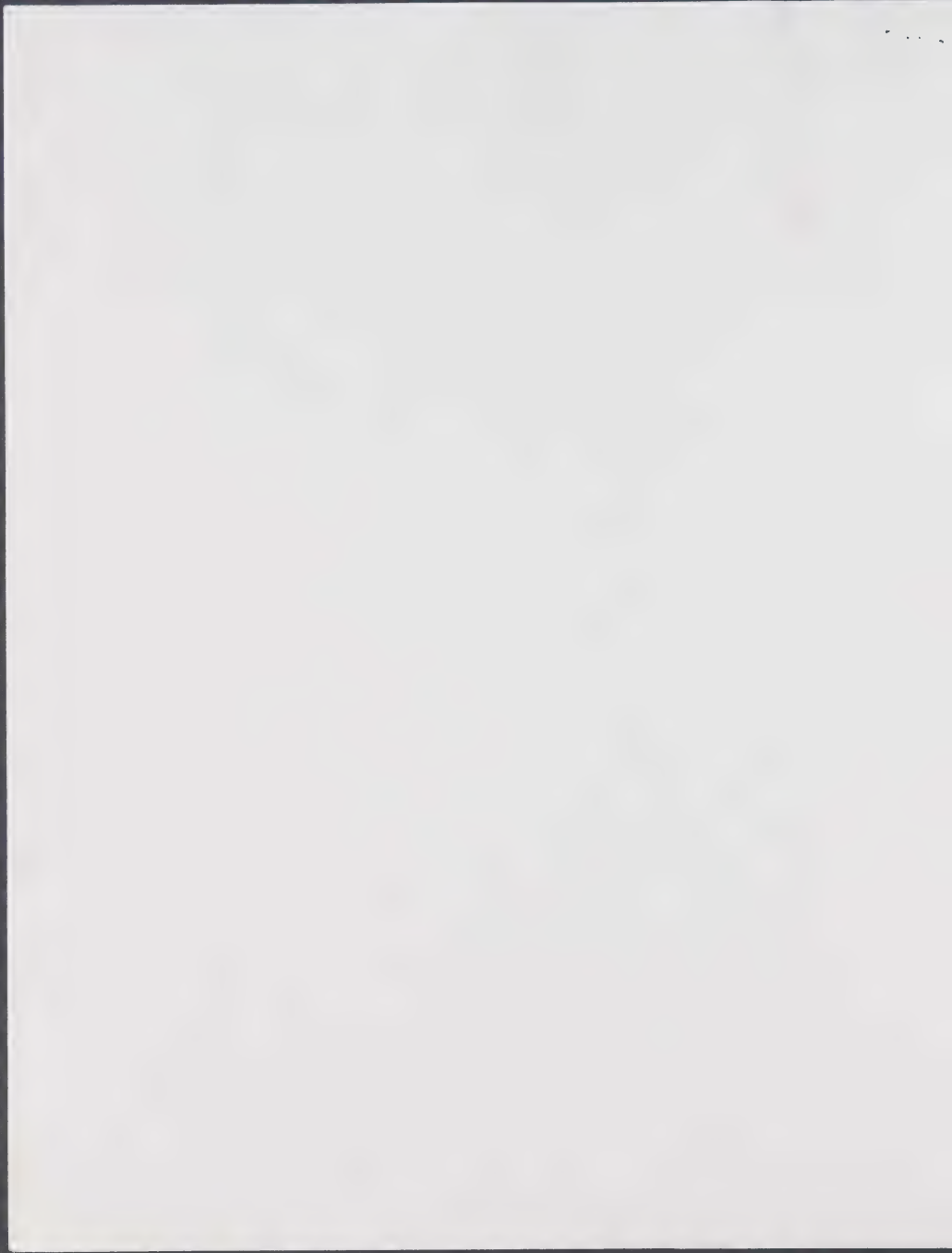
4 The flower pieces dated 1668 and 1669 are less sophisticated renderings. There are also a few flower and fruit pieces which are dated 1709.

5 As in a work of 1652: sale A. Mak, Dordrecht, 7 June 1973, no. 3, ill.: canvas, 53 × 45 cm, signed and dated.

6 Bob Haboldt Gallery, New York, canvas, 73 × 55 cm, signed and dated.

7 Private collection, canvas, 115 1/2 × 102 1/2 cm, signed, in the literature as by Adriaen Coorte.

COMPARISONS



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FORM 2-1982 7345-10-8043

SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST  
(1644 The Hague - London 1721)

AN OPIUM POPPY AND OTHER FLOWERS IN A GLASS  
VASE and FRUIT ON A STONE A TABLE

Oil on canvas, each 21 1/4 x 17 1/4 inches (54.5 x 44 cm)  
Signed indistinctly in black: lower right; Signed  
in beige: lower right.

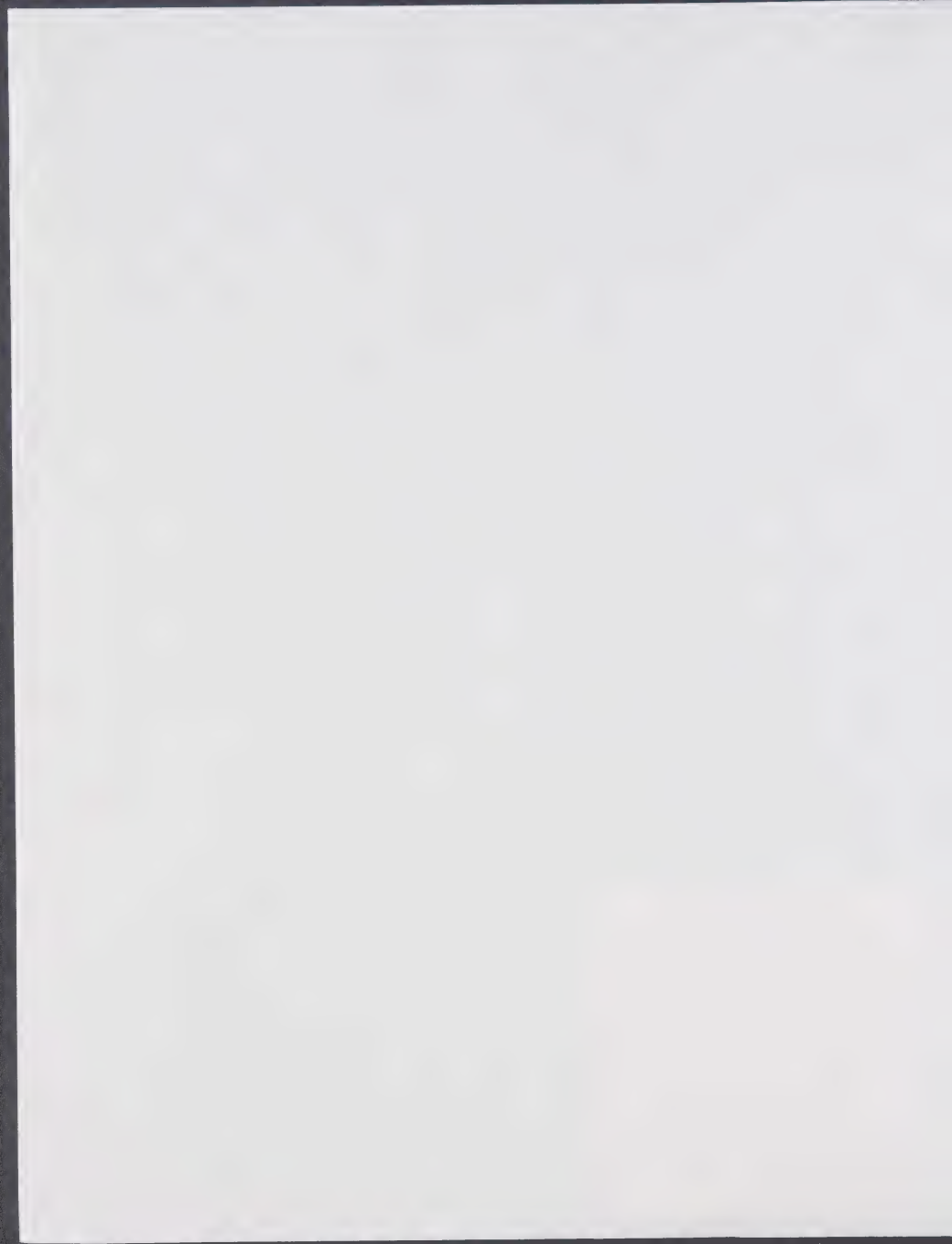
**PROVENANCE:** Private Collection, United States, for the past  
twenty-five years.

**EXHIBITION:** Catalogue by Sam Segal, *Flowers and Nature,  
Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries*,  
Amstelveen 1990, pp. 224-225, cat. no. 56.,  
Nabio Museum of Art, Osaka: 20 April-16 May 1990,  
Tokyo Station Gallery, Tokyo: 2 June -28 August  
1990, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney:  
4 September - 28 October 1990.

**LITERATURE:** See exhibition, 1990; Walter Liedtke, *Pepys and  
the Pictorial Arts*, *Apollo*, April 1991, p.227-  
237, illustrated in color. p. 231; Powell von  
Wiest, *Art and Antiques*, *Where. New York*,  
February 1991, p. 9-11, cover illustration.

PRICE (The pair): \$850,000.00

After paying  
\$550,000, it  
seemed reasonable  
to offer the pair  
at \$850,000!



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27 Feb. 1990

Dear Sam,

I've just come from Mrs. Blumels, and the  
Verelst. are coming out beautifully. For  
the record, I copied the inscription:

So ( Verelst. J<sup>a</sup> 1672

The flower picture has almost lost its signature,  
and all that remains is:

f. J~

If all goes according to schedule, you  
shall have the paintings in Holland by  
April 1<sup>st</sup>

Yours, Otto E.

PS; FEDE BALIZIA HAS BEEN PAID THIS WEEK!!

Alfred-

Under the blacklight  
the full signature of  
Uexst is visible  
in the flower ptg.

-Otto



Otto Naumann  
49 Havemeyer Road  
Irvington, NY 10533

**INVOICE:** 4 November 1996

Dr. Alfred Bader  
Alfred Bader Fine Arts  
Astor Hotel - Suite 622  
924 East Juneau Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

For the following painting:

**SIMON PIETERSZ. VERELST** (The Hague 1644 - 1721 London )

*An Opium Poppy and other Flowers in a glass Vase*

indistinctly signed at bottom right in black: *S. Verelst Fecit*  
oil on canvas  
21 1/2 x 17 1/4 inches (54 1/2 x 44 cm.)

**TOTAL:** **\$275,000.00**

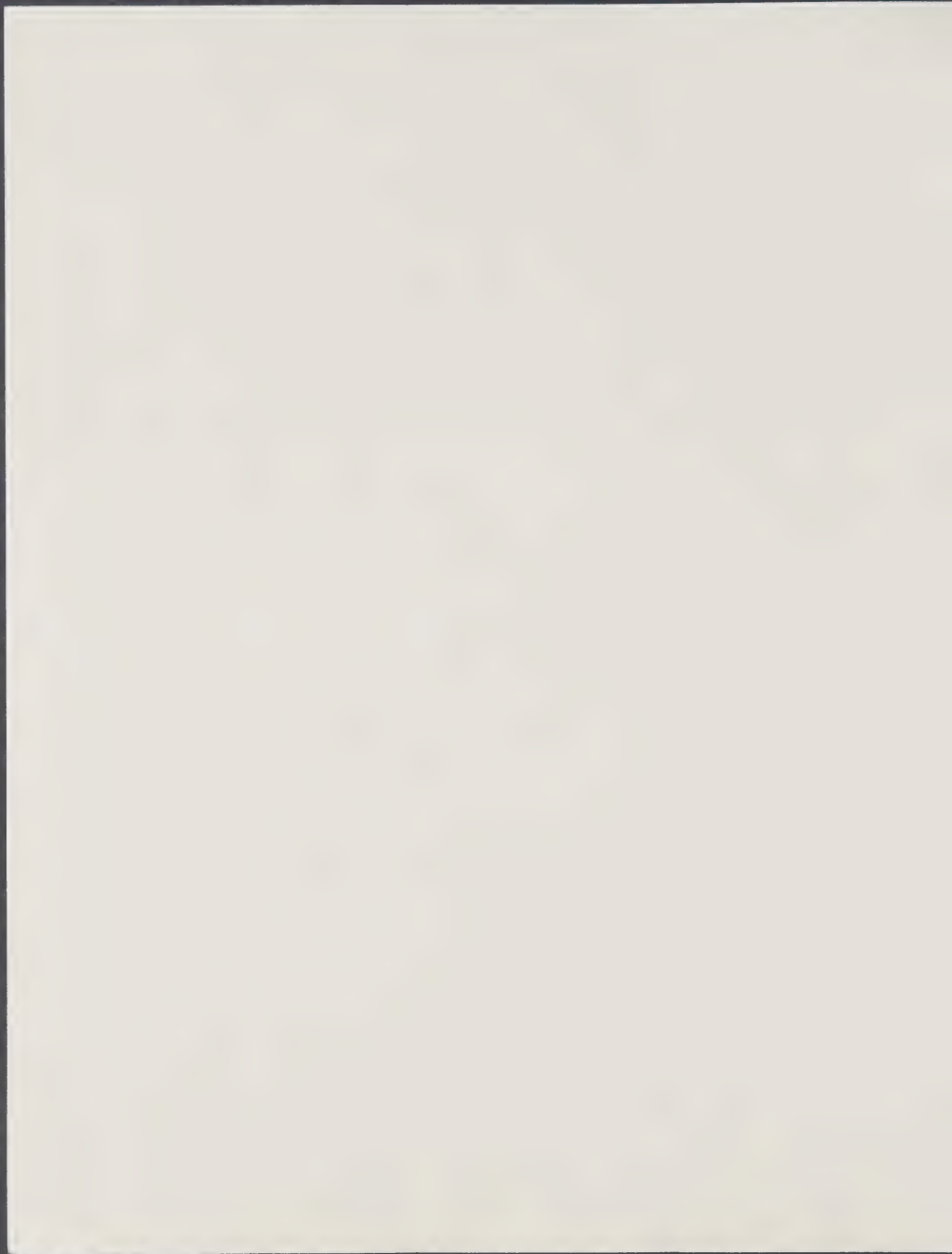
Please pay the amount indicated by check.

I hereby guarantee the authenticity of the above work of art against its individual purchase price. Title transfers automatically upon receipt of full and valid payment.

Sincerely yours,



Otto Naumann





3 *The arrest of Christ* (above left) by Gian-Domenico Tiepolo (1696–1770). Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk. The wash is applied with extreme precision in this most dramatic drawing. The classically-inspired nude at the left is presumably derived from St Mark's Gospel, XIV, vv. 51–2, and the linen cloth referred to can be seen at the left of the main group



4 *Self-portrait of the artist sketching* (above right), by Thomas Gainsborough (1727–88). Pencil. Dated in this exhibition 'around 1754–9' on the grounds of style and costume. The figure, however, which is cut out and pasted on to what is either a later landscape or one by a different hand seems to be earlier, and bears comparison with the small-scale oil portraits and conversation pieces of the period c. 1748–53. The background was recorded at one point in the drawing's history as by Joshua Kirby, Gainsborough's friend

5 *Half-nude with cat* (right), by Heinrich Campendonk (1889–1957), 1912. Woodcut with water-colour. This striking example of the printmaker's art is typical of the way in which the Department of Prints and Drawings has diversified over recent years



2 *Caricature of four Men* (opposite), by Pier Francesco Mola (1612–66). John Rowlands had had this drawing at the back of his mind since he first saw it at Colnaghi's in the 1960s. It then disappeared from view until it turned up with other works by the artist at a New York dealer's and was acquired in 1989. It is flanked at the exhibition by two Mola drawings presented by Sir Denis Mahon and the exhibition also contains Mola's sole surviving cartoon.



1 *Lady Twisden* (left), by John Greenhill (1640/5–76), c. 1676. Coloured chalks on buff paper. This finished portrait is accompanied by one of the sitter's husband and they demonstrate what a major loss Greenhill's early death was to the British School. He drowned in a gutter in Long Acre while coming down from The Vine Tavern very drunk



6 *Study of a woman standing* (above), by Martin Drölling (1752–1817). Black chalk on blue paper. Presented anonymously by a friend of the Museum, this is typical of the way in which John Rowlands has tried to build up the collection in areas in which the holdings were not strong, and the drawing seems almost to epitomize the Empire. The sitter must be the artist's daughter who appears in Drölling's best known work, *A Kitchen Interior* of 1815, which was bought by the Louvre at the Salon. The drawing came to the Department as an anonymous gift



7 Exhibited as 'Anon. French 18th century?'. This drawing (left) unfortunately deserves its question mark. It purports to represent 'An Academy Life School, around 1745–50'. It is in red chalk on paper. It was previously offered to the Royal Academy which turned it down, but then was acquired by the B.M. in 1990. Its authenticity largely depends on a related painting in the Royal Academy collection which is referred to in the B.M. exhibition. That painting, which has been widely published as representing the St Martin's Lane Academy in the 1730s, has now been surface-cleaned and recent examination proves what seemed likely: that it is a fake, produced in England in about 1885 (at which date it was bought by the Royal Academy). The painting is discussed in the forthcoming exhibition 'The Artist's Model' which opens at Nottingham University Art Gallery at the end of this month before transferring to Kenwood in June. This drawing repeats, with variations, the errors and inconsistencies of the painting. In the 1970s the drawing was ascribed to the Young Cochin and was then in Switzerland

# Pepys and the pictorial arts

'Great plenty of good pictures'

WALTER LIEDTKE

Reading the diaries of Samuel Pepys, a candid record of his life and of London life in the 1660s, is a rejuvenating experience for anyone familiar with seventeenth-century society in England, and to some extent in Holland as well. Indeed, one is 'familiar' only after reading Pepys, Evelyn, and a few other diarists and correspondents of the period, but especially Pepys (Plate 1). The diaries offer continual records (more mementoes than confessions) of womanizing, often rendered impishly in pidgin Spanish or *franglais*; complaints of health and hangovers; the daily ups and downs of life with Elizabeth, Pepys's wife ('all friends again'); problems at the office; and the house-proud pleasures of making a home. But there are also eye-witness essays on historic events. The five-day account of the Fire of London (2–7 September 1666) is so immediate in parts—Pepys wrote in shorthand and in private, as if talking to himself—that it has the flavour of a news flash in the early days of radio.

An experience somewhat similar to that of reading the most evocative entries in Pepys might be had by the admirer of Dutch marine painting who for the first time visits the *Vasa*, the sixty-four-gun Swedish warship that sank on her maiden voyage in 1628, and is now raised, restored, and exhibited in the Vasa Museum, Stockholm. The sense of recognition is startling, even moving, since the relic is unique. Both the *Vasa* and paintings of slightly later date come to mind when one reads, in Pepys's entries for 22–23 May 1660, lines such as we weighed Ancre, and with a fresh gale and most happy weather we set sail for England...

My Lord fired all his guns round twice, and all the fleet after him; which in the end fell into disorder, which seemed very handsome.<sup>1</sup>

This is a canvas by Willem van de Velde the Younger cast into words. The light, the fluttering sails and ships



1 Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), by John Hayls (16007–1679), 1666. Oil on canvas, 75.6 × 62.9 cm. National Portrait Gallery. On 14 February 1666, Pepys went with Edward Montagu, 1st Earl of Sandwich, 'to his painter, Mr Hales, who is drawing his picture—which will be mighty like him, and pleased me, so that I am resolved presently to have my wife's [see Fig. 3] and mine done by him'

scattered to the horizon, these visual incidents count all the more when taken in context, for the king is on board, the fleet is leaving Holland, and in the phrase,

'we set sail for England', Pepys has recorded the Restoration of Charles II.

The value of reading Pepys for the study of Dutch and English painting, our main concern here, is essentially three-fold. First, there are specific references to known works of art and to contemporary artists, such as the well-known mention of a mural by Samuel van Hoogstraten, or of 'a Dutchman newly come over' (11 April 1669), the still-life painter Simon Verelst. Second, there is Pepys's general appreciation of the arts, which is



that of a well-connected but modestly cultivated member of the upper middle class. Third, there are many references to the circumstances of daily life that place genre paintings and other contemporary pictures into fresh perspective, which is timely, since the academic discussion of seventeenth-century genre painting has lately grown stale.

Pepys was no Arundel or Buckingham. He does not correspond with an artist like Rubens, or seek out paintings by Titian, but sets off with his wife to 'Mr. Cades to choose some pictures for our house' (21 November 1661; the reference is to prints not paintings). Pepys's 'Dining-room was finished with

1 *A view of Windsor Castle* by Hendrick Danckerts (c. 1630–c. 79). Oil on canvas, 67.3 × 91.4 cm. Christie's, London (22 March 1974). Several views of Windsor by Danckerts are known; one was formerly in the Royal Collection

2 *Boscobel House and Whiteladies* by Robert Streeter or Streater (1624–80). Oil on canvas, 1.36 × 2.13 m. Hampton Court, reproduced by Gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen. This picture was probably commissioned by Charles II c. 1670, and commemorates his escape from Cromwell's forces in early September 1651

greene Serge hanging and gilt leather' on 19 October 1660, which recalls the Amsterdam interiors painted a few years later by Pieter de Hooch. Two months later Pepys went back to the stationery

shop of John Cades 'and looked over some pictures and maps for my house' (1 January 1662). And two years later (26 December 1663) Pepys went again 'to Cornhill to Mr Cades, and there went up into his warehouse to look for a map or two; and there finding great plenty of good pictures. God forgive me how my mind run upon them. And bought a little one for my wife's closet presently'. Pepys also arranges to buy ten pounds-worth more, but he does not confide to Cades, as he does to the *Diary*, that somehow he will bill it to his employer, the king.

Once again, on 2 February 1666, Pepys 'did look over some pictures at Cades for my house'. On the 19th Pepys bought two books at the same shop and then 'home. I find my wife gone out to Hales her painter's, and I, after a little dinner do follow her, and there do find him at work, and with great content I do see it will be a very rare picture' (Fig. 3).

Twenty months later, on 29 September 1667, Pepys was talking all afternoon with his wife about buying a coach and 'doing something to my house which will cost money—that is, furnish our best chamber with tapestry—and other rooms with pictures'. One picture was bought 'for our blue-chamber chimney' on 23 November 1668, just hours after Pepys saw the Duke of York's treasurer, Thomas Povey, the owner, as Pepys often notes in the *Diary*, of a splendidly appointed house.

'Keeping up with the Joneses' was clearly, for Pepys, largely a matter of emulating Povey, although the latter was in another league when it came to buying pictures and writing them off as a business expense. The two *amateurs* went together 'to Dancrest to speak something touching the pictures I am getting him to make for me' (1 February 1669). 'Dancrest's' is Hendrick Danckerts (c. 1625–80), 'the famous lanskip painter' (22 January) and printmaker from The Hague who spent some years in Rome during the 1650s, then moved to England after the Restoration. He painted dry classical landscapes for Charles II but is better known for the views of English towns and palaces in the Royal Collection.<sup>2</sup> Pepys records on 22 January 1669, that Danckerts 'took measure of my panels in my dining-room, where in the four [sections] I intend to have the four houses of the King—Whitehall, Hampton Court, Green-

wich—and Windsor' (Fig. 1). On 31 March Pepys called at 'Dancré's and there saw our pictures which are in doing, and I did choose a view of Rome instead of Hampton Court'.

From Danckerts's studio Povey (1 February) 'carried me to Mr Streeters the famous history-painter over the way [Robert Streeter, Serjeant-Painter to the King 1663–1679] (Fig. 2) whom I have often heard of but did never see him before; and there I found him and Dr Wren [Christopher Wren, Surveyor of the King's Works 1669–1718] and several virtuosos looking upon the paintings which he is making for the new Theatre at Oxford'. The assembled connoisseurs thought Streeter's canvases would turn out 'better than those of Rubens in the Banqueting-house at Whitehall, but I do not so fully think so'. Pepys then proceeded 'to my Lord Bellasses . . . only to see a chimney-piece of Dancré's doing in distemper with egg to keep off the glaring of light, which I must have done for my room; and ended it is pretty, but I must confess I do not think it is altogether so beautiful as the oyle pictures; but I will have some of one and some of another'.

Pepys entered Povey's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields for the first time on 19 January 1663. After dinner the pair went 'from room to room, so beset with delicate pictures, and above all, a piece of perspective in his closet in the low parler' (Plate III). A week later (26 January), another fine dinner at Povey's, 'But above all things, I do the most admire his piece of perspective especially, he opening me the closet door and there I saw that there is nothing but only a plain picture hung upon the wall'. After another dinner and tour on 30 May 1664, Pepys sums up his impressions:

And in a word, methinks for the perspective upon his wall in his garden . . . with the perspective in the little closet . . . and the inlaid floors, his grotto and vault, with his bottles of wine . . . his furniture of all sorts . . . good pictures and his manner of eating and drinking, doth surpass all that ever I did see of one man in all my life.

John Evelyn visited Povey's house on 1 July 1664, and also mentions 'the perspective in his court; painted by Streater'.<sup>3</sup> In 1693 Povey sold 112 pictures and some books to his nephew William Blathwayt of Dyrham. Many of these goods were sold off in 1765 (and later in 1956), but the mural by Van



3 Elizabeth Pepys, engraving by James Thomson after the portrait painted in 1666 by John Hayls. Pepys noted that 'Here Mr Hales begun my wife in the posture we saw one of my Lady [Elizabeth] Peters, like a St Katharine', but he offers no explanation for the iconography (15 February 1666). Photograph courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Magdalene College, Cambridge

Hoogstraten, a number of decorative Dutch paintings, and some portraits remain at Dyrham Park.<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Povey must have been one of Samuel van Hoogstraten's first English patrons, since the artist moved to London in May 1662, and the *View down a corridor* is dated with that year. One wonders, therefore, whether *A palace courtyard* by Van Hoogstraten at Dyrham Park (Fig. 7) also came from Povey,<sup>5</sup> and might even be identical with 'the perspective in his court, painted by Streater'. It would seem, at first, that

the artist in question is certainly Robert Streeter, but then, what did Van Hoogstraten ('from the high stree!'—'highstreeer?') call himself in England, and did Evelyn mistake the name for that of a better known painter of architectural views? The description of a painting as in Povey's garden or court need not mean that it was exposed to the elements (one imagines a portico against the back wall of the house), but it does suggest a work of some size, and of course the *Courtyard's* subject would be rather well suited to the site.

In any case, Pepys, like Povey and Evelyn, was entertained by *trompe-l'oeil* pictures, perspective paintings, and optical instruments. Given a rare and chance view 'into the King's closet' on 3 October 1660, Pepys remembers (to quote the account in full) the 'most incomparable pictures. Among the rest,

a book upon a desk which I durst sworn was a real book'. His taste remains the same on 15 March 1668, when a friend shows him 'several things painted on a deal Board'. The small paintings, perhaps of still-life motifs (Fig. 4), were so wonderfully done that Pepys is 'troubled that so good pictures should be painted upon a piece of bad deal', but then he learns that 'it was not board, but only the picture of a board'.

Similarly, when Pepys saw a flower still life by Simon Verelst (see Plate II) and Verelst himself in the house of 'Loton the landskip-drawer' (Jan Looton, c. 1618–1681; in London by July, 1662), the 'little flower pott [with] drops of Dew hanging on the leaves' compelled Pepys 'again and again to put my finger to it and feel whether my eyes were deceived' (II April 1669). Verelst wanted seventy pounds for the picture, and Pepys 'had the vanity to bid him 20/- but a better picture I never saw in my whole life, and it is worth going twenty miles to see'.

In the 1650s and 1660s illusionistic pictures and especially 'perspectives' were associated with the revelations of optical instruments such as the camera obscura, and the broader question of how the eye sees. This, at least, is the impression that some scholars have received from studying artists such as Carel Fabritius and his former fellow student Samuel van Hoogstraten, from writers on art such as Van Hoogstraten himself, from authors of perspective treatises such as Samuel Marolois, and from the diaries of dilettantes such as Constantijn Huygens.<sup>6</sup> A few entries in Pepys's *Diary* strengthen the connection between Pepys's reactions and contemporary scientific ideas. In the same years that Van Hoogstraten, Vermeer, and many other Dutch painters were employing artificial perspective schemes with new (though not unprecedented) enthusiasm, Pepys was fascinated by the discourse of William, Lord Brouncker (first president of the Royal Society) on 'the principles of Optickes'. And that it is not the eye at all, or any rule of optiques, that can tell distance; but it is only an act of reason, comparing one mark with another. Which did both please and inform me mightily', as Pepys records on 28 July 1666. The next day he has two prominent makers of optical instruments to a mid-day meal at home, John Sprong and Richard Reeve, the latter lens maker to the king:

After dinner to our business of my Microscope... and then down to my office to look in a dark room with my glasses and Tube, and most excellently things appeared indeed, beyond imagination. This was our work all the afternoon, trying the several glasses and several objects; among others, one of my plats [maps], where the lines appeared so very plain.

Pepys had purchased a microscope and a form of camera obscura, perhaps the 'Tube' with various lenses, from Reeve on 13 August 1664. The tube was called a 'Scotoscope... and is of value; and a curious curiosity it is to [see] objects in a dark room with'. Pepys took the instruments home and then



4 *A trompe-l'œil still life of letters* by Wallerand Vaillant (1623–77). 1658. Oil on canvas, 51.5 × 41.5 cm. Sotheby's, New York (10 January 1991). Illusionistic 'letter racks' were painted by Vaillant, Edwaert Collier, Samuel van Hoogstraten and other artists active in the 1660s. © 1991 Sotheby's Inc.

'read a little in Dr Powre's book of discovery by the Microscope'. The mention of the microscope together with the camera obscura in several passages of the *Diary* recalls Vermeer's presumed relationship with Anthony van Leeuwenhouck, the famous microscopist, Delft citizen, and trustee of the painter's estate.<sup>7</sup>

Earlier in 1666, on 21 February, Pepys was told by Lord Brouncker 'about [the] art of drawing pictures by Prince Roberts's [Prince Rupert, first cousin of Charles II] rule and machine, and another of Dr Wren's; but he says nothing doth like Squares, or, which is the best in the world, like a dark room—which pleased me mightily'.

Brouncker was comparing the 'drawing frame' or 'perspective frame', consisting of a sight and a grid of strings stretched in a frame, with the camera obscura as a tracing device. Three years later Pepys noted 'the instrument for perspective made by Dr Wren, of which I have one making by [John] Browne' (30 April 1669); on 8 May 1669, 'comes Browne the Mathematical-instrument maker, and brings me home my instrument for Perspective, made according to the description of Dr Wren's in the late *Transactions*'.<sup>8</sup> Various perspective frames of practical design were published in Marolois's *Perspective* of 1628 (Fig. 5) and appear to have been employed by a few Dutch painters, as has been maintained in the case of Gerard Houckgeest's remarkably faithful interior views of the churches in Delft.<sup>9</sup>

Messrs Reeve and Sprong were again at Pepys's house on 19 August 1666, for talk 'upon Opticke enquiries'. One of them brought 'a frame with closes [small holes with shutters?] on, to see how the Rays of light do cut one another... He did also bring a [magic] lantern, with pictures in glass to make strange things appear on a wall, very pretty'.<sup>10</sup> The company also used Pepys's '12-foot glass' to study 'Jupiter and his girdle and Satellites', but Saturn was too dark to see. After the evening's entertainment Pepys had the good sense to complain in his *Diary* that he understood nothing from Reeve about 'the nature and reason' of lenses, because Reeve himself understood 'the acting part but not one bit the theory... which is a strange dullness methinks'. It was actually a common dullness, to judge from remarks in perspective treatises and other diaries of the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup>

Pepys went to Reeve's on 13 July 1668, 'and there saw some, and bespoke a little, perspective—and was mightily pleased with seeing objects in a dark room'. The 'perspective' may have been a 'perspective glass' of some sort, not a picture. But a 'perspective' hangs in the hallway outside Pepys's library (Fig. 6), an interior view of a barrel-vaulted

II *An opium poppy and other flowers in a glass vase*, by Simon Verelst (1644–1721), 1672. Oil on canvas, 54.5 × 44 cm. Private collection (courtesy Otto Naumann Ltd., New York). A pendant canvas, depicting fruit on a stone table, is dated 1672, and both canvases are signed. Verelst asked seventy pounds for such a picture when Pepys met him on 11 April 1669.



# APOLLO

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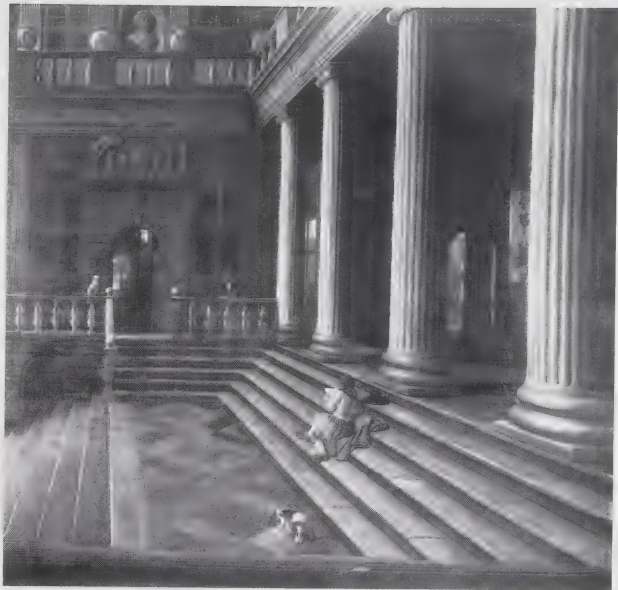
Honour, done by Lilly; good, but not like.<sup>15</sup>

The final solution to the problem of likeness in portraiture was adopted by Pepys on 10 February 1669, when he had his 'whole face done [at] the Plasterer's at Charing cross', though even here he worried about the resemblance when looking into the mould. On the 15th, however, Pepys went 'To the Plasterers and there saw the figure of my face taken from the Mold; and it is most admirably like'.

One of the portraits in Pepys's library might have been of Sir William Penn (Navy Commissioner, and father of the founder of Pennsylvania), whom Pepys found sick in bed on 9 October, 1660: 'And saw in his chamber his picture, very well done; and am with child till I get it copied out, which I hope to do when he is gone to sea'. Another portrait that Pepys 'must have a copy of' is one of Lady Castlemayne that Pepys saw at 'Mr Lillys the great painter' (20 October 1662). 'Believing that I came to bespeak a picture', Lely announced, before Pepys could open his mouth, that 'he should not be at leisure these three weeks, which methinks is a rare thing'.

Pepys's main concern in buying pictures was certainly to improve the general impression made by his house. On 17 October 1668, he worked 'with much pleasure till almost 12 at night [rearranging] pictures in my closet, to my extraordinary content'. Two days earlier he and his wife went to the upholsterer William Crowe's 'to see a variety of Hangings', spending the whole afternoon, 'and at last, I think we shall pitch upon the best suit of Apostles, where three pieces for my room will come to almost 80l'. So much for subject matter: Pepys was fairly open-minded about religious matters,<sup>16</sup> but he could not afford to hint at Catholic sympathies.<sup>17</sup> Evidently a set of Apostle tapestries meant less in London than they would have as decoration in a contemporary Dutch home.

Pepys's appreciation of other collections was consistent with the hopes he had for his own. Apart from Van Hoogstraten's mural, none of Povey's pictures is individually discussed. At Audley End House, seat of the 3rd Earl of Suffolk, there were a lot of things Pepys would not have had at home: 'a great many pictures, and not one good in the house but one of Harry the 8th



7 *A palace courtyard*, by Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–78), c. 16637. Oil on canvas, 2.64 × 2.77 m. Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire (National Trust). The picture may have come from the London house of Thomas Povey (as did Plate II). If so, it would be the 'perspective upon his wall in his garden' seen by Pepys on 30 May 1664, and by Evelyn one month later.

done by Holben' (8 October 1667). Lady Hinchbrooke, by contrast, was 'a lover of books and pictures and of good understanding' (14 March 1668), and the Archbishop of Canterbury's palace in Lambeth, which Pepys visited with Sir Christopher Wren, was a 'noble house, and well furnished with good pictures and furniture' (14 May 1669).

On 30 April 1669, Pepys went to the coachmaker's, to his tailor, to the cutler's for a sword, and to a Mr Oldenburgh's where he saw Wren's type of perspective frame. He then went to 'the varnisher about my print, whereof some are pasted upon the boards, and to my full content', if not to that of present-day paper conservators. Thence to the frame-maker's, one Norris in Long Acre—who showed me several forms of frames to choose by; which is pretty, in little bits of mouldings to choose by.'

Not all of Pepys's prints were varnished and hung on his walls; about 2,500 portrait prints from Pepys's library are preserved at Magdalene College, Cambridge.<sup>18</sup> Most of these engravings represent people of interest for contemporary history: Charles I, Charles II, Louis XIV, William III, Lord Arundel, and Pepys himself (by R. White, after Lely's portrait) are each the subject of numerous examples. There are also many portraits of earlier monarchs, and of artists, which altogether comprise a collector's counterpart to a project such as Van Dyck's *Iconography*. Pepys's (and Evelyn's) diaries and letters have already been read for references to engravings by Levis (1915), so that here it need only be noted in passing that Pepys was a print collector on a very large scale.<sup>19</sup>

One of the prints hung in the house was John Payne's engraving of a great warship, *The Sovereign of the Seas* (1637), which is to be expected, given Pepys's leading role in building a modern navy.<sup>20</sup> Another special interest was cityscape views. On 12 August 1669, Pepys was at 'the printellers over against the Exchange towards Covent garden [for] a few more prints of City'. He probably already had 'Holler's new print of the



City, with a pretty representation of that which is burnt', an engraving that was first shown to Pepys by Lord Brouncker (22 November 1666). Hollar was also admired by John Evelyn, Pepys's more sophisticated friend and fellow member of the Royal Society.<sup>21</sup>

Prints and paintings of foreign cities, like the many illustrated travel books that date from the 1660s, reflect the increasingly cosmopolitan outlook of collectors in London and in Amsterdam. On his visit to The Hague and Delft, Pepys's servant boy 'like myself, is with child to see any strange thing' (15 May 1660), but Pepys himself is especially impressed by buildings and monuments. He visited 'the *grande Salle* [Great Hall of the Binnenhof in The Hague], where we were showed the place where the States General sit in council [Fig. 9]. The hall is a great place, where the flags that they take from their enemies are all hung up'.

On 17 May Pepys 'went to see a house of Princesse Dowagers [Amalia van Solms, at the Huis ten Bosch] in a

8 *The Old Church in Delft with the tomb of Admiral Tromp* by Hendrick van Vliet (1611/12–75), 1658. Oil on canvas, 1.23 × 1.11 m. The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio. Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1984. Tromp's tomb, on the left, was erected in 1658. The relief admired by Pepys is below the effigy

parke about half a mile from The Hague, where there is one [of] the most beautiful room[s] for pictures in the whole world'. The next day he went to Delft, where a smith's boy

showed us the church where Van Tromp lies entombed in a very fine Monument [Fig. 8] ... There is a sea-fight the best cut in Marble, with the Smoake the best expressed that ever I saw in my life. From there to the great church that stands in a fine great Market-place over against the Stathouse; and there I saw a stately tomb of the old Prince of Orange, of Marble and brass [bronze].

Delft itself 'is a most sweet town, with bridges and a river in every street'. Pepys did not meet Vermeer or any other artist, apparently in part because he was usually on the lookout for 'an exceedingly pretty lass and right for the

sport' (19 May 1660). On the canal boat back to The Hague, unfortunately, 'a pretty sober Duch lass sat reading all the way' (18 May 1660).

Our last area of interest, Pepys's observations of everyday life, could not have a more appropriate starting point than his visit to Holland. It is particularly illuminating to see what he takes for granted (for example, making music at home), or considers noteworthy in normal society. None of the lines quoted below refers to a picture, but they bring many paintings to mind. At The Hague, for example, Pepys 'cannot speak enough of the gallantry of the town. Everybody of fashion speak French or Latin, or both. The women, many of them very pretty and in good habit, fashionable, and black spots' (15 May 1660). These cosmetic beauty marks are mentioned several times: on the same day in a public coach were 'two very pretty ladies, very fashionable and with black paches, who very merrily sang all the way and that very well. And were very free to kiss the two blades that were with them. I took out my flagelette and piped'. Pepys gave his own wife 'leave' to wear black patches half a year later, on Lord's day, 4 November 1660, and by the 22 she was wearing 'two or three' and looked better to her husband than the pretty Princess of Orange, 'Henriettee', who was standing nearby.

Pepys was routinely at the ready with his flagelette, his lute, his theorbo, and the latest books of popular songs.<sup>22</sup> When he had coffee with Matthew Locke and Thomas or Henry Purcell (the composer's father), who were 'Maisters of Musique', they tried a 'variety of brave Italian and Spanish songs' (21 February 1660). More common were the evenings spent singing after dinner at home, at a friend's house, or with other gentlemen at the 'Green Dragon on Lambeth hill' (16 January 1660). When he had time, Pepys practised his lute (20 January 1660) or copied out a song, perhaps something like *O God of Heaven and Hell* but more usually one like *Fly boy, fly boy* or *What is a kisse*.<sup>23</sup> Many men and women in Pepys's social circle played instruments after a fashion. One evening in May 1663 he 'went to hear Mrs Turner's daughter play on the Harpsicon, but Lord, it was enough to make any man sick'.<sup>24</sup> Happier was the evening at

Lord and Lady Carteret's when Pepys sang 'with the young ladies and gentlemen, who played on the guittarr and mighty merry' (Fig. 9).<sup>25</sup>

It may seem that lately the usual article on Dutch genre painting is about the virtues of work and of raising a family, or the vice of enjoying one's self. It is refreshing, then, to read that when Pepys was 'with great pleasure lying a great while, talking and sporting in bed with my wife', it was because they were 'a very happy couple' who, incidentally, did not want 'to have children, though I love other people's'.<sup>26</sup> The talk may be of pictures; they need some, whatever the 'iconography'. Or Elizabeth may be asking for singing lessons while she and Samuel 'lay long in bed' and his singing master coincidentally presents himself.<sup>27</sup> On another day 'the Dancing Master came' for Elizabeth who persuades Pepys to sign up.<sup>28</sup>

While a leg of mutton or some other part of an unbalanced diet was often consumed at home, 'white wine and sugar and eating pickled oysters' were enjoyed by the Pepyses in polite company.<sup>29</sup> Pepys would frequently pop into the Sun tavern or 'the Rayne Deare and had some oysters', or stock up on wine and 'two barrells of oysters at home'.<sup>30</sup> When he went to the Duke of York House to see *The Man is the Maister* he treated his friends to a round of oranges at the extravagant price of six pence a piece.<sup>31</sup> These passages in the Diary lend a little local colour to still lifes of the 1660s, for example by Willem Kalf, and to contemporary scenes of fashionable figures offering wine and oysters (Fig. 11).<sup>32</sup>

The same sort of pictures are often subjected to erudite interpretation by scholars who cite emblem books and joyless Calvinist tracts. Many of these explications are persuasive when taken on a case by case basis, but Pepys restores a sense of proportion to our view of how a painting on the wall of a fine home in London or Amsterdam might have been appreciated. Some common subjects, such as singing, dancing, eating

III *A view down a corridor*, by Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–78), 1662. Oil on canvas, 2.64 × 1.36 m. Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire (National Trust). The canvas, monogrammed and dated 1662, was first seen by Pepys in Thomas Povey's house on 19 January 1663. (See also Fig. 7)

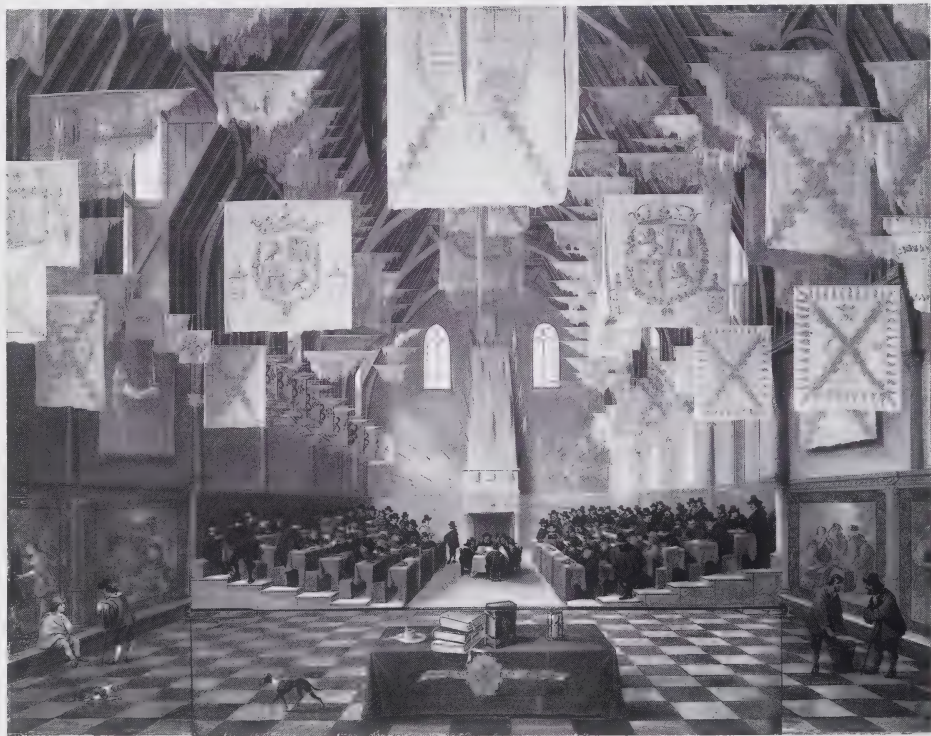




9 *A musical company* (detail) by Caspar Netscher (1639–84), 1665. Oil on canvas, 50.4 × 45.7 cm. Bayerische Staatsgemaldesammlungen, Munich. Although many Dutch pictures of this type offer moralizing messages, Pepys frequently describes such a musical gathering as an evening's innocent entertainment

'... to see a chimney-piece of Dancree's doing in distemper with egg... it is pretty, but... I do not think it is altogether so beautiful as the oyle pictures; but I will have some of one and some of another'

10 *The great hall of the Binnenhof at The Hague* by Dirck van Delen (1604/5–71). Oil on panel, 52 × 66 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The meeting of the States General in 1651 is painted on a metal plate that flips down to show the hall occupied only by strolling visitors. Pepys considered the hall smaller 'but much neater' than that at Westminster (15 May 1660)



oysters, drinking wine, playing music, and flirting with pretty women in fashionable dresses or with handsome young 'blades,' were, for Pepys, everyday pleasures which he enjoyed observing, recording, and thinking about. Of course, Pepys's circle in London was not the same as that of, say, Metsu in Amsterdam or Netscher in The Hague and seventeenth-century society was profoundly different from our own. None the less, the average modern reader of the *Diary* will be struck by nothing quite so much as Pepys's seemingly modern tone.

Another essay on Pepys and the pictorial arts might place him more firmly in the milieu of Charles II, or compare him closely with Evelyn, or bring in the history of *virtuosi* in England and of English art literature.<sup>33</sup> But much of that would go beyond the subject of Pepys. The qualities that appeal to us in the *Diary*—his humour, kindness, curiosity, enthusiasm, and powers of observation—were evidently the virtues most admired by Pepys's associates, many of whom were his social superiors. If his attention to the arts was inspired by the example of courtiers, his actual interests came closer to those of his colleagues in the Royal Society and in the Royal Navy. Craft and science were prized, whether in ships, optical instruments, or illusionistic pictures. Pepys's remarks on style are restricted to simple judgements of quality, usually in portraiture. He had little interest in landscape and never mentions a history picture, or any artist of the past except as the author ('Holben') of an important portrait ('Harry') or as a name (Rubens) brought into the conversation by someone else. Pepys recorded the opinions of a few amateurs, but he spoke, in effect, for a much broader public, in his personal, artless though articulate way. In more than one sense the *Diary* is an everyday account of the 1660s which methinks is a rare thing.



11 A young woman eating oysters, by Jan Steen (1625/6-79), about 1660. Oil on panel, 20.5 x 14.5 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague. To judge from several entries in his diary, the subject here was heaven on earth to Pepys: oysters, wine, and a friendly young lady in a local inn

<sup>33</sup> See O. Millar, *The Tudor, Stuart, and Early Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen, London, 1963*, pp. 153-55.

<sup>34</sup> The standard edition is E. S. de Beer's *Diary of John Evelyn*, 6 vols., 1955. A convenient selection is *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. William Bray, London and New York, 1966. Evelyn considered the perspective in the court 'indeed excellent', but he does not mention the other one (Plate I). Twenty years earlier, on 27 February 1644, Evelyn visited Cardinal Richelieu's villa at Ruell, where he saw 'the Arch of Constantine, painted on a wall in oil, as large as the real one in Rome, so well done, that even a man skilled in paintings, may mistake it for stone and sculpture. . . I was infinitely taken with this agreeable cheat' (Bray ed., p. 55).

<sup>35</sup> See The National Trust, *Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire, 1985*, and Karin-M. Walton, *An Inventory of 1710 from Dyrham Park*, London, 1986, reprinted from *Furniture History*, XXII, 1986, pp. 25-76.

<sup>36</sup> Walton, op. cit., p. 31, states flatly that the *Palace Courtyard* (Fig. 5) had belonged to Thomas Povey and may be the painting admired by both Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn. This conclusion appears to be supported not by any document but by a letter from John Povey (nephew and clerk of William Blathwayl) to Thomas Povey, dated 5 December 1700, describing the difficulty of hanging the large canvas, 'so there is a Necessity of placing it in one side of the Best Stair Case' (Walton, p. 31, and more fully in *The National Trust*, op. cit., pp. 57-58) which is where one finds it today. I am very grateful to Anthony Mitchell, Historic Buildings Representative for Wessex, for his informative tour of Dyrham Park and for literature and photographs. A small panel sold at Sotheby's, London, 11 December 1985, no. 98, as by B. van Bassen, appears to be Van Hoogstraten's own meticulous replica (probably not a *modello*) for the *Palace Courtyard*.

<sup>37</sup> See Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., *Perspective, Optics, and Delft Artists around 1650*, New York, 1977, and my review in *The Art Bulletin*, LXI, 1979, pp. 490-96; also Christopher Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, Oxford, 1981.

<sup>38</sup> See Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., *Jan Vermeer, New York, 1981*, p. 13, and Albert Blankert, *Vermeer of Delft*, Oxford, 1978, documents 45, 50-54, on pp. 151-53. Also reminiscent of Van Leeuwenhoek's Sprong's study of moth wings, mentioned by Pepys on 7 August 1664.

<sup>39</sup> Despite many recent books on Wren one turns to James Elmes, *Memoirs of the Life and Works of Sir Christopher*

Wren, London, 1823, p. 269 for a description of Wren's perspective frame, which is illustrated in the *Philosophical Transactions*, no. 45 (March, 1669), p. 898. See also Elmes, p. 148, on the devices of Wren and Prince Rupert which were compared by the Royal Society on 11 November 1663.

<sup>40</sup> Walter Liedtke, *Architectural Painting in Delft*, Doorspij, 1982, pp. 52-54.

<sup>41</sup> The passage recalls the projection of giant shadows on a wall as illustrated in Samuel van Hoogstraten *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst: Anders de Zichtbare Werelt*, Rotterdam, 1678, p. 260, although the plate does not demonstrate a magic lantern proper (on which see Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art*, London and New Haven, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> In his preface Jean du Breuil, *La perspective pratique* Paris, 1642-49 (3 vols.), complains that modern painters had not learned perspective practice but merely copied the examples in treatises. See also Constantijn Huygens on Cornelis Drebbel, in *De Jaag van Constantijn Huygens door Hemself Beschreven*, translated from the Latin and edited by A. H. Kan, Rotterdam, 1971, pp. 117-23 (p. 121 for an account of the *camera obscura* in use, and p. 86 on the same with the De Gheyns and Torrensius).

<sup>43</sup> On supposed views of the interior of St Peter's by Bartholomew van Bassen and Gerard Houckgeest, see Liedtke, op. cit. (n. 9), p. 25 and n. 14. Similar pictures were painted by Daniel de Bieck, who went to England in 1657 (Liedtke, p. 73). Much more on De Bieck will be found in the catalogue of the exhibition at Rotterdam, Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, 'Perspectieven', 1991 (fall).

<sup>44</sup> See R. W. Symonds, *The Pepys Dyrham Park and Serjison Bookcases, Connoisseur*, LXXXV, May 1930, pp. 275-85, figs. I and VIII; and Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland*, London and New Haven, 1978, p. 306 and figs. 25-26.

<sup>45</sup> For references to portraits of Elizabeth Pepys by Cooper and others see *The Shorter Pepys*, index on p. 1078.

<sup>46</sup> See O. Millar, *The Queen's Pictures*, New York, 1977, p. 70 and colourplate X; idem, *Sir Peter Lely*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1978, p. 63 under no. 45.

<sup>47</sup> Ollard, op. cit. (n. 1), pp. 327-29.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16, on Pepys being accused of having an altar and a crucifix in his house, in 1673; *The Shorter Pepys*, pp. 369, 417, 950, 968, 970, for Pepys fearing his wife's threatened conversion. How the Church of England viewed Apostles as decorative subjects is a question I have not had time to pursue.

<sup>49</sup> John Charrington, *A Catalogue of the Engraved Portraits in the Library of Samuel Pepys, F.R.S., now belonging to Magdalene College*, Cambridge, 1936.

<sup>50</sup> Howard C. Levis, *Extracts from the Diaries and Correspondence of John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys relating to Engraving*, London, 1915.

<sup>51</sup> Pepys first saw the ship itself in 1661 (Ollard, op. cit., p. 34). For the print see Levis (*ibid.*), p. 48 (ill.).

<sup>52</sup> See K. S. van Erde, *Venesclaus Hollar, Delinctor of His Time*, Charlotteville, 1970, pp. 79-81. Hollar's print is a broad panorama with a legend identifying fifty-eight buildings, mostly churches. A pendant print represents the same view of London in its flourishing condition before the fire, designed by *N. Hollar of Prague*.

<sup>53</sup> On playing and singing see *The Shorter Pepys*, pp. 2, 7, 9, 10-19, 22, 25, 44, 51, 52, 65, 97, 158, 591.

<sup>54</sup> *The Shorter Pepys*, pp. 18, 52, 97. *O God and What is a Kiss* were by the same Composer of the King's Private Musick, Henry Lawes.

<sup>55</sup> *The Shorter Pepys*, p. 270, under 1 May 1663. From this point on there are too many dates to cite them all in the text, so that page numbers will be given instead.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 591, under 25 February 1666. See Pieter Fischer, *Music in Paintings of the Low Countries in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Amsterdam, 1972, and Richard D. Leppert, *The Theme of Music in Flemish Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, Munich, 1977 (2 vols.).

<sup>57</sup> *The Shorter Pepys*, pp. 229 and 1019 (1662 and 1669).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158 (1 October 1661).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271 (4 May 1663).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53 (2 June 1660).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 86, 99 (late 1660).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 895 (26 March 1668).

<sup>63</sup> See Liane de Girolami Chény, *The Oyster in Dutch Genre Paintings: Moral or Erotic Symbolism?*, *Artibus et Historiae*, 15, 1987, pp. 135-58.

<sup>64</sup> See Luigi Salerno, 'Seventeenth-Century English Literature on Painting', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 14, 1951, pp. 234-58, where Pepys is not discussed; and Ian Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England 1680-1768* London and New Haven, 1988.

<sup>1</sup> Dates in the text refer the reader to entries in the *Diary*. For the most part my harvest is gleaned from a complete reading of *The Shorter Pepys*, selected and edited by Robert Latham, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985, which is an 1,100-page selection from *The Diary of Samuel Pepys, a new and complete transcription* edited by Robert Latham and William Matthews, volumes I-XI, 1970-1983, likewise published by the University of California Press. Both publications are very well indexed but do not always lead the reader to the passages discussed here. An excellent study of Pepys is Richard Ollard, *Pepys, A Biography*, New York, 1984 (first ed., 1974).

# Stella Mary Newton OBE

Pioneer of the History of Dress

JANE BRIDGEMAN

Stella Mary Newton is ninety this month. This profile and accompanying articles are offered in tribute to her achievements as designer and historian

In 1965, at the age of sixty-six when most people have retired, Stella Mary Newton created a two-year post-graduate course in the History of Dress. Based at the Courtauld Institute of Art this was, and still is, the only course of its type in the world.

Stella's path to the Courtauld was certainly not that of a conventional art historian as Roderick Gradidge describes elsewhere (pp. 240–44), but perhaps the turning point in Stella's life came in 1936 when she married the freelance writer Eric Newton, then art critic of *The Guardian*. Through his interest in Italian art and their joint experience of lecturing on art and dress during the War for Cambridge University Extra-Mural Department, Stella discovered that a study of dress could be relevant to art history. In 1952 Eric's *Tintoretto* was published. It had an appendix written by Stella in which she dated several previously undated portraits on the evidence of dress. Reviews in *The Spectator*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Architects' Journal* and other publications were full of praise. *The Listener* reviewer commented, 'Why did no one think of doing this before?' In the same year Sir Philip Hendy invited her to become a consultant on dress to the National Gallery. For the following decade she made important contributions to the work of the Gallery and her observations on dress are included in the catalogues of the Italian, German and Netherlandish Schools.

Working at the Gallery brought Stella's studies of dress (which by now had been published in various journals) to the attention of Lord Robbins, at that time a trustee both of the National Gal-



1 Stella Mary Newton at home in her London flat shortly before her ninetieth birthday. She is photographed with drawings by her late husband the artist and critic Eric Newton. Through their work together Stella discovered the relevance of dress to art history. Photo: Robin Ross

lery and the Courtauld Institute of Art. He was convinced that the history of dress, informed as it was by Stella's practical experience of designing and making, should be taught by her as an adjunct of art history.

The Department for the Study of Historic Dress was subsequently established at the Courtauld Institute through the enthusiastic and influential help of Lord Robbins, the financial support of Angus Acworth and the agreement of Anthony Blunt, the Director. From

1971 onwards (after a trial period from 1965 to 1969 when the students received a Courtauld Diploma) successful graduates from Stella's course were awarded a University of London MA in the History of Dress.

Stella's work at the Courtauld, answering innumerable queries from public galleries and dealers as well as teaching, together with her publications, established the History of Dress as an academic discipline (a bibliography of Stella Mary Newton was published in a Festschrift number of *Costume*, no. 21, 1987). A quarter of a century later the fruitful results of combining dress history with the history of art are evident in her most recent publications: *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince* (1980) and *The Dress of the Venetians 1495–1525* (1988). Stella 'retired' from teaching in 1975, receiving an OBE in that year for her contribution to the history of dress. No-one who has been taught by her will forget her stimulating and informative approach to her subject nor the vitality of her lectures, always delivered with a wonderful clarity of diction unknown to most academics.

Stella continued to lecture until very recently, and she retains a mental and physical energy sometimes lacking in those half her age. It is a measure of the respect and affection that she inspires that most of her students are still in contact with her, and that those who live abroad make a point of visiting her when in London.

1 *Stella Mary Pearce* by Eric Newton (1893–1966). 1921. Pen, ink and watercolour on paper (actual size). Private collection. Sitter and artist were married in 1934. Photo: Robin Ross



NEW YORK. The Old Master sales have followed the now well established pattern of sky-high prices for the top works of art but little take-up for the middle market, with both auction houses having high bought-in rates, 34% at Christie's and 39% at Sotheby's.

The market is becoming increasingly polarised as the fight for the best intensifies, and these sales were dominated by the second Rembrandt to come up in three months, this time a portrait of a young man which sold for \$12.65 million (see illustration and commentary). There was, however, a feeling, particularly among the trade, that following the frenzy of Christie's December sales which broke record after record (see The Art Newspaper, No. 110, January 2001, p. 43) it was time to draw breath and take stock.

Dealers have been reporting an increasing number of clients interested in Old Masters as their taste develops from Impressionist and Modern painting, and the auction houses are wooing the private collectors hard. Christopher Apostle of Sotheby's reported that more people than ever before had viewed the sale and there were many new private buyers at both Sotheby's and at Christie's. The Botticelli in the Renaissance sale was bought by a new client and Christie's Rembrandt was underbid by a new client.

With a market that has been rising so fast for so long it is tempting to pitch the estimates deliberately high, but it is a risky business. The auction houses may carry it off and find the right private buyer but if they do not, and there is no trade interest they fall flat as a pancake.

This was best shown at Christie's when the cover lot, Frans Francken's "Collector's cabinet", estimated at \$2.3 million, failed to elicit a single bid. Over-estimated, commer-

## Sale report: Old Master paintings, New York

### Top prices for top quality

Noortman bags his second Rembrandt in three months



**Salomon van Ruysdael, "Estuary scene"** (est. \$1-1.5 million), sold for \$1,105,750 to Otto Nauman. This was about as desirable and commercial a Dutch painting you are likely to find and Otto Nauman got it for a steal at Sotheby's on its reserve. Recently paintings by Salomon van Ruysdael, the great master of Dutch seascapes, have sold for as much as £2 m. Is this a sign that some of the heat is going out of the market or just one of those lousy opportunities?



**Carlo Maratta, "Tobias and the angel"** (est. \$600-800,000). Made \$1,216,000 from an American private collector.

The market for Italian baroque painting has been growing every year. Here three determined private buyers at Christie's pushed the work to a new world record by Maratta. This is a huge price and demonstrates a shift in taste with private clients.



**Michel Garnier, "A woman in the Palais Royale"** (estimate \$400-600,000), sold for \$621,750.

The market for French 18th-century painting has been remarkably strong and here was an example of a minor artist's masterpiece. In 1987 it sold at Sotheby's Monaco for FF12,109 million, a very high price for the time. Bidders were not daunted by the heavy estimate on this classic image of vice confronting innocence, with a marvellous depiction of the woman's costume. It sold at Sotheby's to a telephone bidder, underbid by Johnny van Haeltten.



**Frans Francken II, "Collector's Cabinet"** (estimate \$2-3 million), unsold.

Collector's cabinet paintings have suddenly begun to make huge sums. Christie's sold one by Frans Francken II in 1999 for \$326,500 and David Teniers II's outstanding "View of the Architectural Gallery in Brussels" was sold for £2.9 m, also in 1999. These works are now much coveted by private collectors, especially if the gallery and works of art can be identified. This one, however, was allegorical, showing the personification of painting in an imaginary collector's cabinet. Although a superb example of the genre, the estimate was too greedy. Robert Noortman made an offer for it after the sale but it remained unsold.

**Rembrandt, "Portrait of a gentleman in a red doublet"** (est. \$6-8 million), made \$12,656,000 (£8,668,493).

This portrait fetched \$9 million when sold by Sotheby's New York only two years ago. Its sale was the result of the takeover bid for Steve Wynn's Mirage Resort Group. In 1998 the painting had been bought by Otto Nauman and Alfred Bader and sold on to Steve Wynn for his Bellagio Art Gallery for an undisclosed sum. Its reappearance at Christie's so soon was risky, especially in the light of the sale of Rembrandt's "Portrait of an old woman", which



had been bought by Noortman for £19 million in London only three weeks before. Otto Nauman had tried to buy back the painting directly from the Mirage Group but the decision had been to send it to auction and this time Nauman (who had underbid the London Rembrandt) did not appear to bid. Bidding opposed Johnny van Haeltten and Conrad Bernheimer against a new private collector in the telephone. After the two dealers dropped out, there was one more telephone bid and then Robert Noortman stood to make the final bid at \$12.6 million – a healthy return on a two-year investment. The flamboyant Dutch dealer now has two Rembrandts in stock. (An interview with Robert Noortman is on page 71)

**Lorenzo Lippi, "Group portrait with Vittoria della Rovere"** (est. \$600-800,000), sold for \$720,750.

This painting had been the star turn of Clovis Whitfield's stand at the New York Fine Art Fair in 1999 where it had been offered for over \$2 million. Although an intriguing and original portrait, it is unusual and not a straightforward commercial piece and clearly could not sell at such a price. Vittoria was the daughter



of Claudia de' Medici and Frederico della Rovere, Duke of Urbino. In the background is the church of the Santissima Annunziata in Florence which was beside the palazzo, home of the Medici family at this time. At Sotheby's it sold to an anonymous telephone bidder.



**Josepe de Ribera, "The raising of Lazarus"** (est. \$1.5-2 million). Bought at Sotheby's by the Spanish bank Caja Madrid for the Prado, for \$1.7 million.

This is a completely unpublished work authenticated by Prof. Nicola Spinosa. Executed early in Ribera's career in 1616, when he was still in Rome and under the influence of Caravaggio, it is a work both of great quality and art historical importance. Formerly in the Spanish Royal Collection in the Royal Chapel of the Palace of Alcazar in Madrid, this was an obvious one for the Prado.

cial paintings in the middle market range met similar fates: a Juan de Arellano flower painting was bought in with a \$50-70,000 estimate and a coastal scene by Vlieger with a \$50-70,000 estimate, also remained unsold.

Richard Green paid twice the high estimate for Pieter Breughel II's scene of Flemish revellers at \$1,381,000, and established a new world record for Simon Verelst, when he bought a flower painting at \$523,000. However, with the exception of the Rembrandt, for once Dutch and Flemish painting was not the hottest ticket in town.

Two baroque paintings, one by Carlo Maratta at Christie's and the other by Ribero at Sotheby's, made top prices and a perfect Italianate landscape by Claude Lorrain fetched \$2,095,750; there just are not many around and this is four times what it had sold for in 1990. It is the scarcity of great works which is driving these top prices. The Getty is never going to find a Dürer so it paid \$2.645 million for Hans Hoffman's "A hare in a forest".

With works by Boucher and Fragonard now fetching well over a million dollars (if you can find them), a telephone bidder paid an unprecedented \$621,750 for Michel Garnier's frilled and beribboned coquette, "A young lady in the Palais Royale". This was yet another signal of the strength of French Old Master paintings, which had already made an extraordinary jump in the 1999-2000 period.

Elsbeth Moncrieff

#### Old Master paintings, Christie's New York, 26 January 2001

Sold by value	78%
Sold by lot	66%
Sale total	\$25,926,625 (£17,757,962)

#### Arts of the Renaissance/Important Old Master Paintings, Sotheby's New York, 25 January 2001

Sold by value	74.03%
Sold by lot	61.37%

Sale total \$32,320,475  
(£22,223,559)

(Sotheby's figures combine results for the two sales)

LONDON. Only an Italian would choose St Valentine's Day for a major sale of Islamic carpets and European tapestries. Christie's entrance was festooned with red roses as deal-

## Sale report: Davide Halevim stock

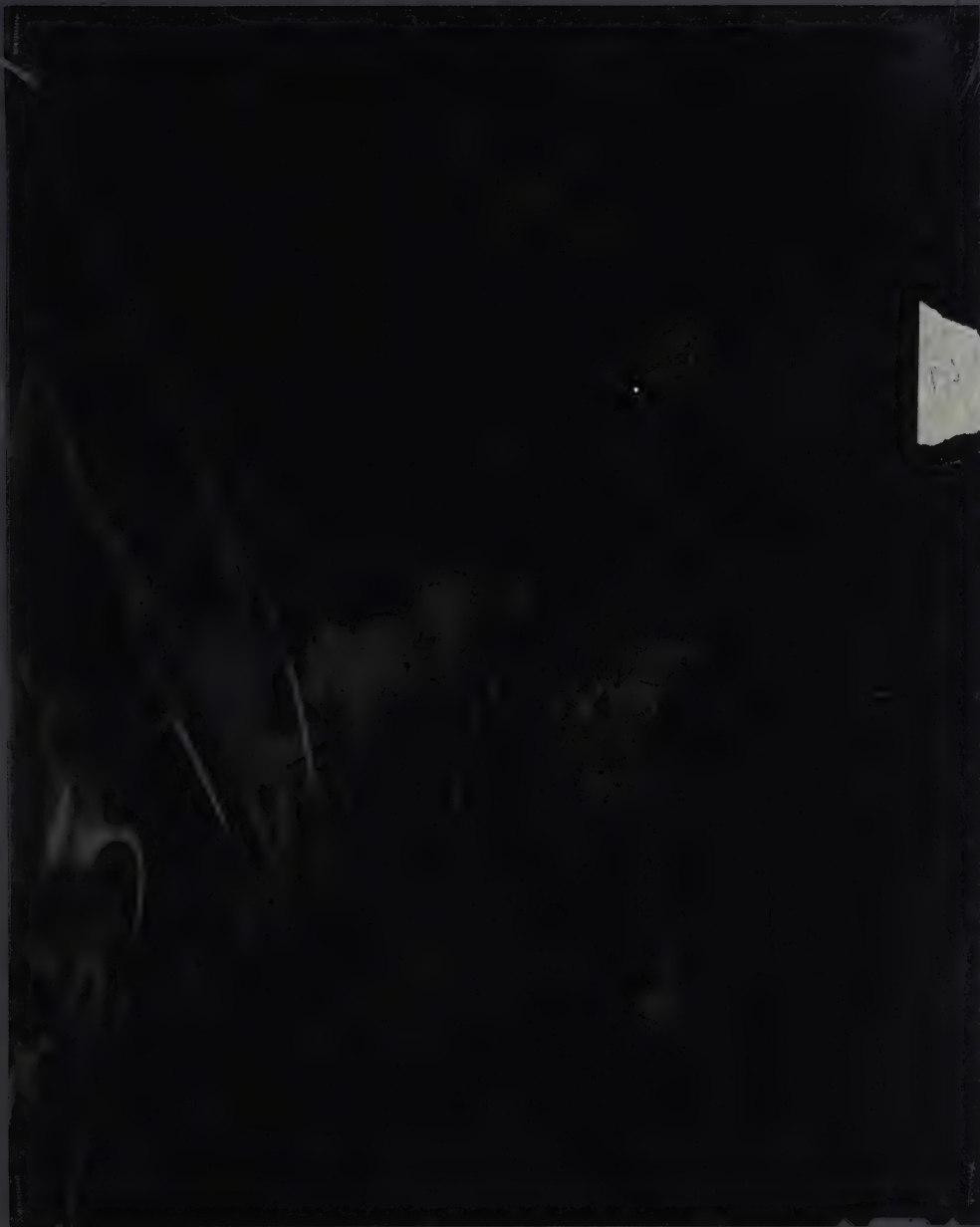
### A Star Kazak for Valentine's Day

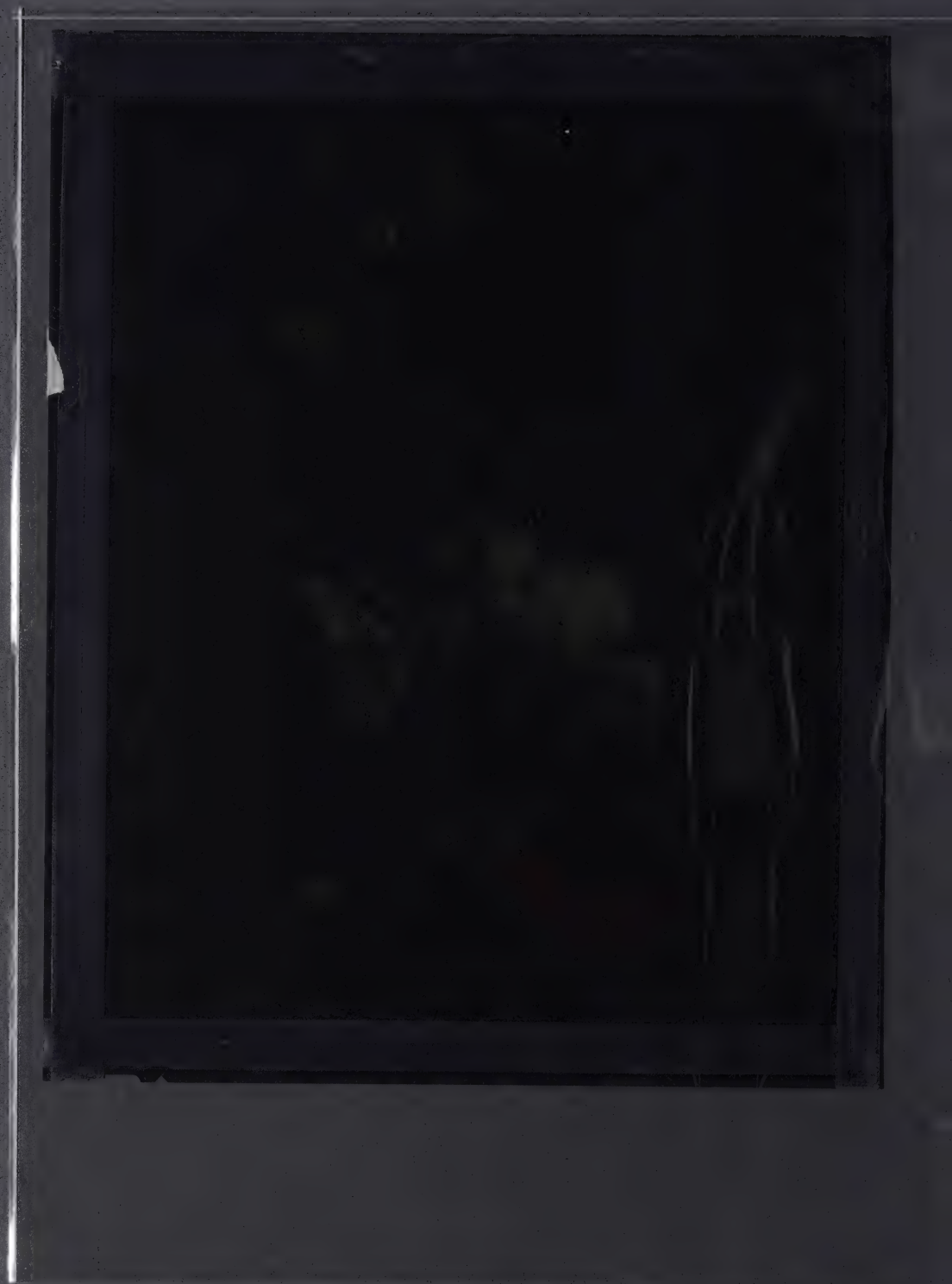
But the sale failed to pull in this day's auction

Mr Marcusson agreed with most that the *millefleurs* tapestry was simply too much money and so the expected highlight of the afternoon proved to be a damp squib. The

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indeed a pair, an observation that is supported by their provenance and measurements, and also by the similar materials and technique employed in both works. Verelst painted in a large variety of formats, but there are hardly two extant pictures of the same size. Only the fruit still-life is dated, and as such is his only surviving dated fruit piece. The flower picture is an example dating from Verelst's best period, i.e., his early years in England, most of his few dated works were painted during this period<sup>8</sup>. His later production is characterized by less movement and in general the contours become more pronounced. Verelst's execution also became less meticulous. The glass vase in the flower piece contains the following species<sup>9</sup>:

African Marigold (bottom center) *Tagetes patula*  
 Whitish Pink Rose (bottom left) *Rosa provincialis* x *R. alba*  
 Peony (overhanging) *Paeonia officinalis salmonea plena*  
 Snowball (center) *Viburnum opulus* cv. *Roseum*  
 Tulip (left) *Tulipa schrenkii* x *T. biflora*  
 German Flag (top left) *Iris germanica*  
 Opium Poppy (top) *Papaver somniferum fimbriatum plenum*  
 Pot Marigold (top, behind) *Calendula officinalis*  
 Rosa Mundi (bottom right and *Rosa gallica* cv. *Versicolor*  
 on the table-top)

Butterflies:

- a. Blue (bottom left) *Polyommatus icarus*  
 b. Red Admiral (bottom right) *Vanessa atalanta*

The fruit piece presents us with two sorts of grapes, a melon, a peach, cherries and red and white currants; in a white earthenware bowl are Seville oranges, blackberries and grapes, and on the gleaming pewter plate lies a split peach. There are several butterflies: above is a Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) in flight, on a vine leaf in the center a Large White (*Pieris brassicae*), and on the peach leaf at the bottom is a Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*). Again, pink and reddish tints are much in evidence. By and large, the composition follows the S-shaped line of the flower piece, with the hanging cluster of grapes at the bottom left and the vine-leaves at the top right. In order to achieve this effect, the table-top is situated higher than in the flower piece, leaving ample room for the signature. The desiccated leaves of the peach and

of the vine leaf in the middle, its veins turning yellow, are beautifully rendered. In contrast to this effort Van Aelst painted relatively simple fruit pieces throughout his career, beginning merely with a cluster of fruit lying on a stone ledge, and occasionally adding a pewter plate<sup>10</sup>. In comparing our fruit piece with those of Willem van Aelst, for instance a work of 1670<sup>11</sup>, we see the S-shaped construction to be a translation of his flower pieces, and not of his fruit pieces.

Undoubtedly, Simon Verelst was concerned first and foremost with the decorative value of his artistic production. However, he did not neglect the traditional symbolic content and this observation is borne out by a number of early flower pieces with a watch, which in turn relate to earlier paintings by Van Aelst. In these florals by Verelst, the rose leaves are very withered indeed. A similar Verelst fruit piece, placed in front of a landscape bathed in evening light, may also have connotations of transience<sup>12</sup>. If our flower and fruit pieces are actually intended as a pair depicting the seasons, it should be borne in mind that the potential seasonal aspects refer only to the flowers and fruit depicted and not to the cherries and currants, which are early summer fruits at a time when the peony is in bloom; and butterflies are usually past their prime by the time that grapes are ripe. We are reminded of Jan van Huysum, who composed his complicated bouquets of flowers that bloomed at different times of the year, thus creating an image that could never exist in reality.

REMARKS: An unsigned copy or version exists of each work, differing in detail. The repetition of the flower piece was at the Waterman Gallery, Amsterdam in 1980: canvas, 56 x 45 cm., catalogue *Niederländische Stillleben des 17. Jahrhunderts* (exhibition in Munich), illustrated; the other fruit piece was in a sale at Sotheby's, London, 26 October 1988, no. 116, canvas, 52 x 41 1/2 cm.

Sam Segal

PROVENANCE: Private Collection, United States.

EXHIBITION: Osaka, Nabio Museum of Art, Tokyo, Tokyo Station Gallery, and Sydney, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Flowers and Nature - Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries*, 1990, nos. 56 and 57, reproduced.

LITERATURE: Sam Segal, 1990, pp. 106-107, 224-225 (see exhibition); Walter Liedtke, "Pepys and the Pictorial Arts", in *Apollo*, 138/350, April, 1991, pp. 230-231, fig. II.



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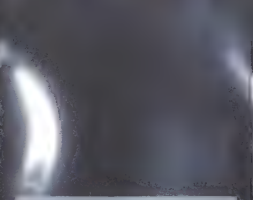
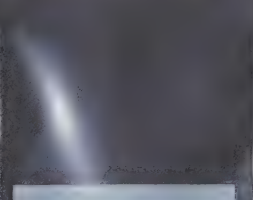
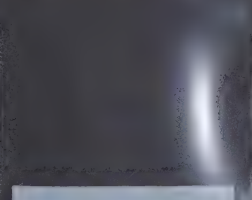
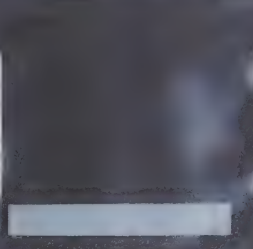
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