



GALLERY
NOTES®

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JOHN MITCHELL
FINE PAINTINGS

EST 1931

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JAN DAVIDSZ. DE HEEM (1606 UTRECHT-1684 ANTWERP)

A Banquet Piece with Lobsters, a Tankard and Roemer Glass

oil on panel, 29 x 24 in. (73.7 x 61cm), signed and dated 1632

Provenance:

J. Paul Getty (1892-1976), Sutton Place, Surrey
Christie's, New York, 9th July 1982, lot 57
Asbjorn R. Lunde Collection, New York

Literature:

Dr. Fred G. Meijer, *Jan Davidsz. De Heem (1606-1684)* A dissertation and catalogue raisonné.

Part 1 and part 2, June 2016, Universiteit van Amsterdam, supervised by E.J. Sluiter, catalogued and illustrated, p.32, no. A024

Positioned next to a bunch of grapes and vine leaves, two boiled lobsters with a cut and peeled lemon and a peach on a pewter plate produce complex reflections in Jan Davidsz. De Heem's early *banketje* (banquet piece).

With its restrained colours and thinly applied paint, this beautiful still life on an oak panel belongs to a scarce group of recorded and dated works from the period

when De Heem lived in Leiden before he moved to Antwerp in the mid-1630s where he became known for his flamboyant and Baroque flower bouquets [see **fig.1**] Having experimented with *vanitas* paintings in his formative years, whilst in Leiden De Heem began to paint in the manner of the Haarlem still life master painters such as Willem Claesz. Heda and Pieter Claesz. who specialized in the 'monochrome' *ontbijt* or breakfast piece pictures. Their cool greyish-brown compositions were highly finished and using the shiny surfaces of Dutch Roemer glasses, tankards and silver or pewter tableware Heda, in particular, achieved illusions of great intricacy. In De Heem's fine and similarly sized *Still Life with a Nautilus Cup* (The Barber Institute, Birmingham) also from 1632, it is interesting to compare the prominence he gave to the exquisitely rendered lemon peel- a hallmark of the Haarlem practitioners -with the one in our banquet piece. Looking at the accuracy with which he rendered the surface of the lemon rind, the delicate tendrils of the vine leaves and even the lobsters' wispy antennae, it seems unsurprising that as his career went from strength to strength once in Antwerp, De Heem was destined to become perhaps the greatest of all the still life and flower painters in the Netherlands. Born in Utrecht and having studied with Balthasar van der Ast, one of the founding fathers of still life paintings, De Heem subsequently absorbed the Flemish traditions of Jan Breughel's work in Antwerp before taking on his own illustrious pupils such as Abraham Mignon and Elias van den Broeck. Few other artists could boast of a richer heritage within a genre of painting.



fig. 1

A Flowerpiece, oil on copper, 49.1 x 38.7cm, signed
Private collection, Montreal, courtesy of John Mitchell Fine Paintings.

Due to unforeseen circumstances brought on by the Covid-19 virus, we have now, regrettably, had to postpone our exhibition of **James Hart Dyke's** paintings of *North Norfolk* until later this year. Meanwhile, please see our website for a preview of several finished paintings.

GALLERY NOTES[®]

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