

Floris Gerritsz. van Schooten

active 1605 - Haarlem - 1656

Still Life in the Corner of a Kitchen

Oil on panel

37 x 50 cm (14 1/2 by 19 2/3 in.)

Signed in monogram: FVS

Provenance:

Private Collection, France

Exhibitions:

The European Fine Art Fair, Maastricht 1994

Floris van Schooten was a major contributor to the Haarlem market of still lives during the greater part of the first half of the seventeenth century and up to his death in 1656. His oeuvre is rather varied and reflects both the changes of taste in the market and the influence of fellow townsmen like Floris van Dijck, Pieter Claesz. and Roelof Koets. Accordingly, Van Schooten's work comprises several styles and types of still life. All of them, however, show the artist's personal, rounded manner and even during the most monochrome period of still life painting, the 1630's, Floris van Schooten appears to have

manifested himself as an advocate of colour. The main subject of his still lives is food, shown in many varieties and combinations; fruits and vegetables, meat, fish and cheese, presented on formal tables, in kitchens and market stalls.

It was not until 1918 that Abraham Bredius reunited Van Schooten's name with his still lives. He usually signed with a monogram only, and his works had previously been catalogued as by 'the monogrammist FVS'.¹

Pictures of markets and kitchens constitute a considerable part of Floris van Schooten's work.² Most of these are fairly large, with the objects rendered almost life-size, seen at close range and often animated by the presence of one or two figures. As Gammelbo observed, Van Schooten's figures are usually quite immobile, almost rigid. This rigid pose stature enhances the stillness of the images, rather than enlivens them. Good examples of Floris van Schooten's large markets and kitchens can be found in several museums, among them the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum at Braunschweig³ and the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum.⁴

1) Bredius (1918) pp. 1610-11

2) A basic catalogue of Van Schooten's work was published by Poul Gammelbo: *'Floris Gerritsz van Schooten'* in *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 17, 1966, pp. 105 - 142. His catalogue of 112 works - only three or four of which should be deleted and assigned to other artists - could now be expanded by several scores of still lifes, having emerged since. These newly found works do not, however, disrupt the general image of Van Schooten's oeuvre given by Gammelbo.

3) Catalogue of 1983, nr. 1138.

4) Despite the fact that it was correctly included in Gammelbo's catalogue of Van Schooten's work in 1966 (nr.2), it was catalogued by the museum in 1976 with an attribution to Floris van Dijck (cat.nr. A 2058).



cat. no. VIII

Besides the large images of kitchens and markets (pl.1), Van Schooten also produced a fair number of smaller panels with these subjects, in which he shows them from a greater distance, often with small, almost puppet-like figures. Whereas the larger, richer pieces were probably destined for an upperclass market, these smaller panels probably found their way to the homes of the 'general public'. The present still life is a slightly uncharacteristic example of the latter type of kitchenpiece; uncharacteristic because it is entirely devoid of figures. It represents a corner of a kitchen or a larder, with a variety of copper and earthenware vessels and pans, together with a barrel, a tub of apples, a plate of meat and some vegetables. This is surely not a rich kitchen; all the objects are rather common household stuff and the vegetables, mainly cabbages, carrots and gherkins, belonged to the daily food of the population. Although meat did not, the bits shown here do not appear to be more than cheap leftovers.

As Floris van Schooten only dated a small number of his works, and not one of the type shown here, it is not easy to propose a date for it with great certainty. However, as this type of still life was mainly popular in Holland in the 1630's and 1640's and as dating it as such does not appear to conflict stylistically with other works by the artist from that period, it seems reasonable to believe that it was painted in circa 1640, assuming a fairly wide margin.

Fred G. Meijer



Pl. 1 Floris Gerritsz. van Schooten,
*A Kitchen Interior with a Maid before a Table
Laden with Platters of Food*,
signed with initials and dated: F.V.S 1620,
oil on canvas 103,5 x 153 cm,
Phillips London 11/12/1990