

Simon Luttichuys

London 1610 - 1661 Amsterdam

Grapes, Nuts, a Silver Gilt Dish and a Wine Glass on a Draped Table

Oil on canvas

37,5 x 30 cm (14 ³/₄ by 11 ³/₄ in.)

Signed with a monogram upper right: S.L.

Provenance:

Leonard Koetser Gallery, London 1969
Private Collection, England

Exhibitions:

Flemish, Dutch and Italian Old Masters,
Leonard Koetser, London 1969

Simon Luttichuys painted portraits, as did his brother Isaac Luttichuys, but his real passion and gift was to paint still lifes. Simon was born and brought up in London, where he worked for some years. Moving back to his father's native Holland, he is thought to have been a pupil of Jan Jansz. Treck and was definitely influenced by Jan Jansz. den Uyl and Jan Davidsz. de Heem. Simon primarily concentrated on the depiction of still lifes and perfected a style of quiet elegance. As a quite prolific master, he spent most of his active artistic life in Amsterdam.¹ He began his work more in the style of De Heem, but later cultivated a different and more individual approach. His technique recalls that of Abraham van Beyeren, especially in those paintings which include small casks of

oysters and breakfast pieces with fish. Some of Luttichuys' works dating from the 1640s and 1650s resemble Willem Kalf's work of his Amsterdam period.²

The inventory made after his death contained paintings of figures, animals, landscapes, banquets and Pronk still lifes (pl.1),³ fruits and flower pieces, yet as is the case with our picture, he often painted small and quite intimate compositions with only a few objects.



Pl. 1 Simon Luttichuys, *Pronk Still Life*,
oil on canvas 85,5 x 72 cm

1) Bergström (1956) p.217

2) Segal (1988) p.197

3) compare: Simon Luttichuys, *Pronk Still Life with a Silver Gilt Cup*, Galerie Lingenauber (1984) inv.no.384



Cat. no. XIV

Typically quiet and elegant, the present painting has a brooding atmosphere. Characteristic for the master, this composition reappears in many of his works and represents the classic Dutch still life painting. Luttichuys arrived in Holland after substantial changes in Dutch art had taken place and this had also affected the Dutch still life. Most noticeable was the sudden restraint in color with its pictorial consequence: the monochrome 'banketje'. The dominant colors in those banquet pieces are gray, brown, ochre and white with a green attuned to them.⁴ Moderate colors became the only acceptable colors, and were highly desired by the Dutch collector until the middle of the seventeenth century. This development in Dutch art towards simplification and clarity of composition coincided with the growing influence of Calvinism on the Dutch public.

Grapes, Nuts, a Silver Gilt Dish and a Glass

For the setting Simon Luttichuys chose a dark, neutral background, in front of which he placed a draped table parallel to the picture plane. Objects occupy two rows. The main emphasis is on the gold dish expressing a reserved decorativeness. The irresistible beauty of Luttichuys' still lives dating from the 1640s is granted by the quality of their moderate light.

This light gives gentle relief to modest objects, establishing a richly somber aerial perspective. Luttichuys masterly renders the texture of the dish. In a delicate manner the difference between the gilt and the silver ground have been precisely defined. The tilted dish affords the artist a chance to demonstrate his skill in foreshortening.

In its simplicity the present painting echoes the great works of De Heem and Kalf. Some still lives by Simon Luttichuys demonstrate such mastery that they were until recently published as by De Heem (pl.2).⁵

4) Segal (1985) p.125

5) compare: Christie's Amsterdam, 29/05/1986 lot 160:

Simon Luttichuys, *A Pewter Jug, Lemons and Oysters on a Pewter Plate, an Overturned Roemer and a Knife* with indistinct J.D.de Heem signature and the indistinct date 1.3., oil on canvas 93,5 x 74,5 cm

Exhibited:

Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, *Exposition de la Nature Morte Hollandaise*, 1929, no.52 as J.D.de Heem

The Hague, Koninklijke Kunstzaal Kleykamp, *Tentoonstelling van Schilderijen door Oud-Hollandsche en Vlaamse Meesters*, 1932, no.50, as J.D.de Heem

Literature:

Glück, no. L., ill. as J.D.de Heem, dated 1638

E. Zarnowska, *La Nature Morte Hollandaise*, 1929, p.16, no.52, pl.31, as J.D.de Heem

The attribution has been suggested by Dr. Sam Segal, who pointed out that the de Heem signature and date has been changed from a Luttichuys signature.



Pl. 2 Simon Luttichuys, *A Monochrome Still Life*
oil on canvas 93,5 x 74,5 cm