



CLAESZ., PIETER

(Berchem/Antwerp 1597 - 1661 Haarlem)

Still life with smoker's requisites, a large pewter flagon, a stoneware pitcher on its side, a beer glass and a herring. 1627.

Oil on panel.

Monogrammed and dated lower left: PC A 1627.

50.2 x 74.6 cm.

Provenance: - E. Slatter Gallery, London, 1943. - Otto Wertheimer collection, Paris, 1952. - Mitchell Gallery, London 1957. - Private collection, London. - Galerie Weil, 1960. - Private collection, Switzerland. - Kunsthandel Böhler, Munich, 1966. - Kunsthandel Scheidwimmer, Munich, 1973. - Private collection, Paris, 1990. - Auction Christie's, London, 23 April 1993, lot 182. - J. M. B. Guttmann

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Gallery, Los Angeles, 1994. - European private collection. Exhibited: - London, E. Slatter Gallery, 1943, Flower and Still-Life Paintings by Dutch and Flemish Masters of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century. - Paris, Galerie A. Weil, April/May 1960, La nature morte et son inspiration, no. 12 with ill. - Paris, Institut Néerlandais, 1965, Le décor de la vie privée en Hollande au XVIIe siècle, no. 13. with ill. - Munich, Kunsthandel Böhler, June 1966, no. 4 with ill. Literature: - Exh. Cat. Le décor de la vie privée en Hollande au XVIIe siècle, Institut Néerlandais, Paris 1965, p. 25, no. 13, pl. 4. - Brunner-Bulst, Martina: Pieter Claesz. Der Hauptmeister des Haarlemer Stillebens im 17. Jahrhundert. Kritischer Oeuvrekatalog, Lingen 2004, no. 29, p. 220, with ill. and on frontispiece. Haarlem was among the most important art centres in Holland during the early 17th century. Many artists emigrated from Flanders to the Netherlands at this time, whether because of their Protestant beliefs or due to the poor economic climate there, attracted by the commercial prosperity and growing affluence of the Dutch, particularly in Haarlem. Along with textile manufacturers, breweries were especially successful, and beer was the most common drink, since drinking water was often contaminated at this time. The favourable economic conditions stimulated the rise of a prosperous middle class in Haarlem, ultimately creating a significant consumer base for the arts. Into this society Pieter Claesz. settled in 1620-22. Born in Berchem near Antwerp in 1597, Claesz. was almost certainly trained as an artist within the circles of the Antwerp still life painters Osias Beert (ca. 1580-1623) and Clara Peeters (active 1607-1621 or later), and the influence of their work is evident in his early paintings. Once in Haarlem, his work began to show the influence of the older generation of still life painters there, such as Floris van Dijck (1575-1651), Nicolaes Gillis (ca. 1575/80 – after 1632) and Floris van Schooten (ca. 1580-1656). Banketje still lifes, which typically depict a meal amidst an arrangement of tableware, were a speciality of Netherlandish painting during the Golden Age, particularly in Haarlem, and were in great demand during the 17th century. The large museum-quality work offered here, which has not been available for public viewing for quite some time, belongs to this category. It is also of the *toebackje*, or smoking

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requisites variant, and this paraphernalia is depicted alongside a large pewter flagon on a plate, a knopped beer glass, a sliced herring, bread and a knife, all arranged on a table. Particularly interesting is the monochrome tonality of this work, composed primarily of brown and grey tones and uniquely articulated through dramatically staged light. This reduced palette is a particular characteristic of Claesz.'s Haarlem still lifes. The depiction of the smoker's requisites is considered to be an artistic invention of Claesz.'s, as these motifs first appeared in his work as early as 1622 (Brunner-Bulst, *ibid.*, no. 4, pp. 207-208). The combination of smoking requisites with the eating utensils of a banquet still life, as in the present work, appears in two other smaller-format works by Claesz. from 1627: one is presently in San Diego's Timken Art Gallery (36.2 x 57.5 cm, oil on panel, *ibid.* no. 28), and the other (the composition of which also includes onions) is in a private collection (*ibid.*, no. 30, 37.5 x 47.5 cm, oil on panel). Dr. Martina Brunner-Bulst, who has examined the present work in the original, selected it to illustrate the frontispiece of her catalogue raisonné on Pieter Claesz., thus eloquently expressing the importance of this work within the artist's oeuvre.

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