

TREASURES OF DUTCH & FLEMISH ART

FROM PRIVATE COLLECTIONS



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28 November – 21 December

Hours: 9 am – 6 pm
(closed on weekends)

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I first became enchanted with the works of the Dutch and Flemish masters in my late teens. I had left school and instead of heading to university (my grades were scratchy), I decided to give myself a different kind of education. With just myself for company I spent a year driving round continental Europe, from town to town, church to palazzo, soaking up the art of the great masters.

During this year-long adventure I first visited Holland and Belgium. I remember walking into the Rijksmuseum for the very first time as an eighteen-year-old boy, staring in amazement at Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*. More than fifty years on I still do marvel at this remarkable painting, but I also give myself time to enjoy some of the paintings we have sold to the Rijksmuseum over the years, most memorably two beguiling paintings by the brilliant but enigmatic Jan Mostaert; a *Portrait of a Moor*, perhaps the earliest and only individual portrait of a black African that has survived from this period, and *The Discovery of America*, which is the first painting to depict Spanish soldiers subduing the people who lived in the Americas.

Over the last thirty years at Dickinson, we have sold many great Dutch and Flemish pictures, by Hans Memling, Rubens, Van Dyck and Jan Brueghel among others. The ones that stick in the memory are always those sales to institutions, such as our sales of Quentin Matsys' *Salvator Mundi* to the Getty Museum and a celebrated painting by Jan Gossaert to the Prince of Liechtenstein, now on show in Vienna.

This exhibition showcases paintings and sculptures consigned from private collections, with a few exceptions that belong to the gallery (denoted by *). Most of the works come from British collections, and many have belonged to the same family for generations.

From the characterful portrait by Benson to the sublime and mint still life by Jan van Kessel, I hope you will enjoy the selection and come and visit us at Dickinson to see beautiful paintings that were made to be enjoyed and admired.

Simon Dickinson





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1.

Ambrosius Benson (c. 1495 – 1550)

Portrait of a man, bust-length, in a fur coat

oil on panel

24 x 18.5 cm. (9 ½ x 7 ¼ in.)

Provenance: Private Collection, France. Private Collection, Switzerland. Franz Kleinberger (1858 – 1937), New York, NY. Private Collection, Europe.

The attribution to Ambrosius Benson was first made by Max Jakob Friedländer (1867 – 1958) in 1948, when the painting was with Kleinberger, on the basis of a black and white photograph. The attribution was subsequently endorsed in 2022 by Peter van den Brink on the basis of photographs. Till-Holger Borchert, who has inspected the painting first-hand, believes the sitter to have been painted by Benson.



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2.

Balthasar van der Ast (1593 – 1657)
(attributed to)

Flowers in a glass beaker with brambles, shell and eglantine, on a stone plinth, c. 1618

oil on panel
28 x 18.5 cm. (11 x 7 ¼ in.)

Provenance: Mme. Schoen-Chapon, Paris. Edward Speelman, Ltd., London (as 'Jan Breughel the Younger'). Leggatt Brothers, London. Private Collection, France, acquired from the above in 1968.

Exhibited: Amsterdam, Kunsthandel P. de Boer, *Young Breughel*, 1934 (as 'Jan Breughel the Younger').

This exquisite still life painting was previously attributed to Jan Brueghel the Younger, and subsequently to the 'Pseudo-Bosschaert' by Sam Segal. More recently it has been attributed to Balthasar van der Ast by Fred Meijer, who notes that it is based on an early flower piece by Jan Brueghel the Elder, now in Frankfurt (Private Communication, 2021).



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3.

Gerbrand Ban (c. 1613 – 1652)

Full-length portrait of a little boy holding two tulips and a rinkelbel in an interior with his kolf club and ball

signed and dated lower centre *G.Ban 1647* and inscribed with the sitter's age centre right *Aetatis Meae 1*

oil on oak panel

100 x 71 cm. (39 ⅓ x 28 in.)

Provenance: Private Collection, Cologne. Their sale; Lempertz, Cologne, 22 May 1986, lot number unknown. Richard Green, London, acquired at the above sale. Private Collection, UK, acquired from the above in 1988.

Literature: R. Ekkart, *Portret van Enkhuizen in de gouden eeuw*, Zwolle, 1990, p. 32, no. 44 (illus.). R. Ekkart, 'G.Ban', in *Bulletin Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam, 1991, p. 429 (illus.)

This sensitive portrait depicts a young boy holding a pair of tulips and a *rinkelbel* with a teething tool attached to a chain around his waist. On the ground before him lie a *kolf* club, called a *kliek*, and a ball made of rubber or stitched leather. *Kolf* – a precursor to modern day golf – was popular in the Netherlands from as early as the 13th Century and often appears in 16th and 17th Century genre scenes. During the winter, the game was often played on ice. An arrangement such as this, with a formally dressed child holding a *kolf* club, became a popular format in children's portraiture.



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*4.

Cornelius Johnson (1593 – 1661)

Head and shoulders portrait of the 1st Viscount Falkland, (in or before 1575 – 1633) Governor General of Ireland, c. 1632

oil on oak panel

78.7 x 62.2 cm. (31 x 24 ½ in.)

in a fine Charles I style carved and silvered frame

Provenance: Mallett Antiques. Mr and Mrs Michael O'Neill, New York, NY. Private Collection, UK.

Literature: A.J. Finberg, 'A Chronological List of Portraits by Cornelius Johnson, or Jonson', in *The Walpole Society*, vol. X, Oxford, 1922, p. 24, no. 61 (illus. fig. XLV).

This painting, which is exceptionally well preserved, shows the artist at the height of his powers in the early 1630s. The sitter is quietly and shrewdly observed: without flattery or pomp, and with a calm reflective introspection, it reveals much about the psychology of both sitter and painter.

The 1st Viscount Falkland was an important politician at the courts of Elizabeth I, James I and Charles I and a great patron of the arts, who continued throughout his life to cultivate his literary tastes. He was Lord Deputy of Ireland from 1622 until 1629.



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*5.

Bartholomeus van der Helst (1613 – 1670)

Portrait of a young lady wearing a high 'Cartwheel' ruff, c. 1648

signed lower left *B van der Helst*

oil on oak panel

72.4 x 58.4 cm (28 ½ x 23 in.)

in an ebonised gilt-edged frame

Provenance: Anon. Sale; Christie's, London, 10 March 1950, lot 49 (as 'B. van der Helst'). Private Collection, Los Angeles, CA, by 1976. Lane Fine Art, London. Mr and Mrs Michael O'Neill, New York, NY, acquired from the above. Lane Fine Art, London, acquired from the above.

Literature: J. van Gent, *Bartholomeus van der Helst: een studie naar zijn leven en werk*, Amsterdam, 2011 p. 355, no. A30 (illus.)

Bartholomeus van der Helst has long been considered to be one of the leading portrait painters of the Dutch Golden Age. His elegant portraits gained him the patronage of Amsterdam's elite as well as the Stadtholder's circle.

Although the attribution was doubted in the 2011 catalogue, a recent cleaning has revealed the high quality of the present work. The original conclusion was reached from the examination of an old black and white photograph, and subsequent examination of the signature under a microscope shows beyond doubt that it is authentic and contemporary, pointing to the painting's autograph status.



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6.

Walter Pompe (1703 – 1777)

Cristo Vivo

signed and dated *walte. Pompe. fec. anee. 1729 26/2*

boxwood sculpture

33.3 cm. (13 in.) high

Provenance: Private Collection, France, and by descent until 2019. Art market, France. Private Collection, UK.

This statuette shows Walter Pompe's extraordinary grasp of human anatomy and his obsession with achieving a very fine surface finish. As is typical of his output, the figure is dated precisely to 26th February 1729, presumably the day the work was completed.





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7.

**Giovanni Antonio Canal, il Canaletto (1697 – 1768) and
Pieter Neefs, The Elder (1578 – 1656)**

*A church interior with a view of the altar; and A church interior
with a view of the nave*

oil on copper

each: 8.5 x 6.5 cm. (3 ⅓ x 2 ½ in.); a pair

Provenance: Major Henry Robert Mansel Porter, M.B.E. (1925 – 2014), Pershore, Worcestershire. Edward Speelman Ltd, London. Private Collection, France, acquired from the above on 3 July 1969 (as by Canaletto and ‘one signed with initials’).

The architectural element in these exquisite, tiny paintings on copper is characteristic of the style of Pieter Neefs I. There seems no reason to doubt that the figures, those in the distance abbreviated to dots of paint, are the work of Canaletto. Although no other instance of Canaletto contributing figures to an earlier painting by another artist is known, considerable numbers of Dutch cabinet paintings are recorded in Venetian collections in the 18th Century. It must be presumed that two tiny church interiors by Neefs had remained without figures and that a Venetian collector thought that it would be amusing to ask Canaletto to provide some. It is tempting to relate this to what we know about the character and tastes of Canaletto’s patron and agent Joseph Smith (c. 1674 – 1770). Smith certainly owned a much larger, signed pair of panels by Neefs, showing Antwerp Cathedral by day and by night, which entered the Royal Collection with the sale of the bulk of his collection to King George III in 1762/3. We are grateful to Charles Beddington for endorsing the attribution to Canaletto and Neefs the Elder.





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10.

Isaac van Duynen (1628 – c. 1680)

Still Life of Freshwater Fish; an eel; and a frog, on a table in an interior

oil on canvas

91.4 x 129.5 cm. (36 x 51 in.)

Provenance: Noble Private Collection, England.

Isaac van Duynen was apparently born into a family of fish merchants, according to documentary evidence of the artist's life (RKD archives, The Hague, Netherlands). He may have been a pupil of Jacob Gerritsz. Cuyp and was also influenced by Jan Davidsz. de Heem and Abraham van Beyeren, both highly regarded as painters of still life subjects. Van Duynen travelled to Rome between 1651 and 1657, settling in The Hague upon his return. Van Duynen is best known for still lifes of fish, of which this picture is a typical example. Houbraken (1718) considered him one of the best artists in this genre, and he demonstrates great skill in the handling of the slippery, wet bodies of the fish and their gleaming, reflective scales.



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*11.

Frederick Kerseboom, The Elder (1632 – 1693)

Sir John Langham, Bt. (1671 – 1747), as a boy aged 12, playing the viola da gamba

signed, dated and inscribed lower right, on the stool *Ætats .12./ 1683./ Kersseboom ft*; and further inscribed and dated on the frame *Sir J. Langham Bart. Ætat 12. 1683. His first wife was daughter of Sir Thomas Samwell Bart. His second was sister to Lord Vist. Cobham.*

oil on canvas

143 x 106 cm. (56 ¼ x 41 ¾ in.)

Provenance: Sir William Langham (father of the sitter), Cottesbrooke Hall, Northamptonshire; thence by descent to Sir James Langham, Tempo Manor, County Fermanagh; and by descent.

Literature: B. Bailey, G. Isham, 'Cottesbrooke Hall Revisited', *Country Life*, 19 Feb. 1970, p. 436 (illus.) E.K. Waterhouse, *Dictionary of 16th and 17th Century British Painters*, Suffolk, 1988, p. 148. R. Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 134 (illus. no. 48). B. Gockel, *Kunst und Politik der Farbe: Gainsboroughs Porträtmalerei*, Berlin, 1999, p. 127. P. Holman, *Life After Death: The Viola Da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch*, Woodbridge and Rochester, 2010, p. 57 (illus. pl. 2). M. Fleming & J. Bryan, *Early English Viols: Instruments, Makers and Music*, Oxford and New York, 2016 (illus. nos. 21 & 22).



SIR JOHN LANGHAM Bar.
Æt. 12. 1683. His first Wife
was Daughter of SIR THOMAS
SAMWELL, Bar. His second was
SISTER to LORD VIS. COBHAM

D I C K I N S O N

12.

Lodewyk de Vadder (1605 – 1655)

Landscape with horsemen and hounds

signed with monogram and indistinctly inscribed lower centre

*LDV c*****

oil on canvas

108.7 x 148.3 cm. (43 x 58 1/3 in.)

Provenance: Private Collection, UK. Their sale; Bearn's Hampton & Littlewood, Exeter, 21 Jan. 2014, lot 421 (as 'Studio of De Vadder', with no mention of the signature; unsold). Private Collection, UK.

The landscape painter and etcher Lodewyk de Vadder was made a master in the Brussels Guild of painters on 15 May 1628. De Vadder also painted tapestry cartoons, sometimes in collaboration with Jacob Jordaens. He regularly collaborated with David Teniers II and Gaspar de Crayer, who added staffage to his landscapes. Together with Jacques d'Arthois, De Vadder was regarded by his contemporaries as one of the most significant representatives of the Brussels school of landscape painting, known collectively as 'The Sonian Forest Painters'. Active in the decades before the widespread popularity of plein-air painting, de Vadder drew his inspiration from the wooded countryside surrounding Brussels. In manner, he was influenced by the vivid colouring and rich brushwork of Sir Peter Paul Rubens and Adriaen Brouwer.



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13.

Marcus Gheeraerts, The Younger (1561/2 – 1636)

Portrait of Sir Richard Lee (before 1548 – 1608), Queen Elizabeth's Ambassador to Russia

oil on canvas

122 x 91 cm (48 x 36 in.)

in an ebonised frame

Provenance: Sir Henry Lee, the sitter's elder brother, at Ditchley, Oxfordshire; and by descent to Harold Arthur Lee-Dillon, 17th Viscount Dillon CH FBA FSA (1844 – 1932); thence by descent to a Private Collection.

Exhibited: Oxford, Oxford Historical Society, *Historical Portraits*, April – May 1904, no. 100.

Marcus Gheeraerts was born in Bruges but came to London as a boy with his Protestant father, himself a notable painter. The son outshone his father and Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger seems to have become the favoured large-scale painter of James I's queen, Anne of Denmark.

This portrait, the only known likeness of Lee, was probably commissioned by the sitter's brother Sir Henry Lee, who entertained the Queen at his house at Ditchley, Oxfordshire in 1592. Sir Richard Lee appears to have been a strong and lively character. He fought as a volunteer against the Spanish Armada and in 1600 was appointed Ambassador to Russia and knighted. The position was not a success, however; Lee failed to gain English trading rights with Persia through Russia, and he was unable to arrange a marriage alliance with England. The Queen refused to cover Lee's expenses, leaving him in financial straits.





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