JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A larder still-life with a cockerel hanging from a hook and a sleeping boy with game and a gun at the window

Circle Of WALLERANT VAILLANT

£ POA



REF: 365306

Height: 109 cm (42.9")

London, England

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Width: 89 cm (35")

Framed Height: 137.3 cm (54.1")

Framed Width: 117 cm (46.1")

Description

Wallerant Vaillant was a Dutch Golden Age painter and although a painter in oils, is probably best known now for being one of the first to utilise the schraapkunst - mezzotint - technique. He was born in Lille (which was Flemish until being taken by Louis XIV in 1668) on 30th May 1623, one of five boys who all became painters or engravers although one of them later joined the church and another became a merchant.

In 1639 he was a pupil of Erasmus Quellinus II (1607-1678) in Antwerp but by 1643 he was living with his parents in Amsterdam remaining in that city, apart from a stay in Middleburg from 1647-9 where he became a member of the Guild of St Luke, until 1658 when he travelled with his brother Bernard to Frankfurt and Heidelburg. In 1649 he painted a portrait of Jan Six, a wealthy Amsterdam merchant who had previously been painted and etched by Rembrandt and during this stage of his career in Amsterdam he was not only working on oils but also producing life-size chalk portraits and some etchings.

Stylistically, Vaillant was influenced by the important Amsterdam portrait painter Bartholomeus van der Helst (1613-1670) and then later, during his five years in Paris, by the French School. He travelled to Frankfurt in 1658 seeking commissions from among the ambassadors and dignitaries assembling there for the election of the new Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I. One of those that he encountered was Prince Rupert of the Rhine who was an amateur artist who had recently become interested in the new and still evolving process of producing mezzotints. It is widely believed that Vaillant received instruction in this process from the Prince and that they developed the technique further, making prints together. Vaillant also produced works for the Emperor.

From Frankfurt Vaillant went to Paris where he was given commissions by the Marquis Antoine-Pierre de Grammont and painted several members of the French royal family but it is thought that he did not work on any prints while he was in that city. It was upon his return to Amsterdam in 1664, where he became court painter to John William Friso, Prince of Orange, that he took up his print making with zeal. Eventually more than two hundred and thirty plates were made and he can be described as the first professional mezzotint artist and his work was widely appreciated. A good number of his oil portraits would have been dual commissions as there are examples of both but other subjects that he depicted in both mediums were genre and history scenes and a few still-lifes. One subject that he frequently painted was young men working at a drawing in interiors which were well-composed and can be stylistically compared to Michiel Sweerts (1624-1664) and all the accessories in the room are given great attention and treated as if in a still-life. His later portraits are skilfully composed.

He died in Amsterdam in 1677 and was buried on 2nd September.

Museums and collections where works by Wallerant Vaillant can be seen include: National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, British Museum, Courtauld Institute of Art (London); Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam); Museum Boijmans van Beuwingen; Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); National Gallery of Art, Washington; Fine Arts Museum of San Fran...

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