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JAN WEENIX

Amsterdam 1642/49 – 1719

STILL LIFE WITH FRUIT, SILVER PLATE AND A GLASS GOBLET
c.1675

Oil on canvas
68 × 61 cm

PROVENANCE

Lempertz, Old Masters & 19th Century, Part I, 16 November 2024, lot 2057 (as Gregorius de Coninck); there acquired.

Recently acquired and long obscured beneath discoloured varnish, this refined still life was formerly attributed to Gregorius de Coninck, a little-known and still somewhat elusive personality within the field of Dutch seventeenth-century still-life painting. The attribution, proposed by Dr Fred G. Meijer when the painting was still dirty, has since been reconsidered following thorough study and comparison. On stylistic grounds, Dr Meijer has convincingly re-established the work as an early still life by Jan Weenix, datable to the second half of the 1670s.

The composition presents an elegant arrangement of fruit—grapes, peaches, plums and apples—resting on a partially draped table, accompanied by a gleaming silver plate and a lidded glass goblet set against a deep, shadowed background. A spray of blackberries projects toward the viewer, subtly activating the foreground space. The delicate transitions of light across the translucent grapes and the softly modulated flesh of the peaches exemplify a handling characteristic of Weenix's early maturity: controlled, supple, and atmospheric.

Particularly telling is the sensitive rendering of naturalistic decay, visible in the subtly blemished apple, a detail that finds a close parallel in the painting sold at Bonhams in 2004 (van Wagenberg, cat. no. 232, fig. 1). Although that picture is somewhat poorly preserved—especially in the passages of white grapes—the treatment of the peaches and, more importantly, the worm-eaten apple is strikingly similar. This acute observation of fruit in varying states of ripeness and deterioration, conveyed with understated atmospheric nuance, is one of the defining aspects of Weenix's early works. Indeed, Dr Meijer has situated the present painting within a coherent group of early still lifes by Weenix, most of which were included in Anke van Wagenberg's 2018 catalogue. Born in Amsterdam in 1642, Jan Weenix was trained by his father, the Italianate painter Jan Baptist Weenix, and was admitted to the Utrecht painters' guild in 1664. By the early 1670s he had moved to Amsterdam, where he gradually abandoned Italianate genre scenes in favour of still lifes and, soon after, the ambitious game pieces that would secure his reputation among wealthy patrons. His early still lifes of the mid- to late 1670s reveal a refined and atmospheric handling that precedes the more robust and painterly manner of his later hunting pieces.

Close comparisons with works from this period include the more elaborate still life of 1676 in the Wallace Collection (van Wagenberg, cat. no. 231, fig. 2) and an unsigned example sold in Stockholm in 1981 (van Wagenberg, cat. cat. no. 233, fig. 3), formerly misattributed to Abraham Mignon. Further parallels may be drawn with a fragmentary work sold at the Dorotheum in 2004 (fig. 4) and with a related composition in Potsdam (fig. 3), both connected in turn to the Wallace picture. A signed still life with a comparable lidded goblet, auctioned in Cologne in 1894 (fig. 5), relates to Weenix's magnificent early flower painting in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (fig. 6), and anticipates his later flower piece of 1694 in Lyon. Two paintings incorporating a nautilus cup—one recorded in Eastbourne in 1957 (fig. 7) and



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another, fragmentary but signed, sold in Berlin in 1909 (fig. 8)—belong to the same stylistic constellation. Together with early game pieces such as those in Frankfurt (1681) and Karlsruhe (1682), these works form a consistent group marked by refined softness and luminous clarity (fig. 9).

The present still life thus emerges as a particularly refined example of Jan Weenix's early production. While firmly grounded in the elegant Dutch still-life tradition of Jan Davidsz. de Heem (1606–1684), Willem van Aelst (1627–after 1683), and Abraham Mignon (1640–1679), it reveals a distinctive poetic inflection: an acute sensitivity to naturalistic decay and to the quiet passage of time. The subtly blemished fruit and gently fading vegetation lend the composition a restrained melancholy, transforming technical virtuosity into a living, breathing meditation on nature.



Fig. 1. Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Fruit and Silverware*, Oil on canvas
Sold, Bonhams, 2004 (van Wagenberg 2018, cat. no. 232).

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Fig. 2. Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Fruit and Flowers*, signed and dated 1676, Oil on canvas, 123.5 × 102 cm. London, The Wallace Collection, inv. P 102 (van Wagenberg 2018, cat. no. 231).

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Detail Fig.2



Fig. 3. Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Fruit*, Oil on canvas, 62 × 59 cm.
Sold, Stockholm Auktionsverk, 10-14 November 1981, lot 770 (as Abraham Mignon) (van Wagenberg 2018, cat. no. 233).



Fig. 4. Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Fruit* (fragment), Oil on canvas, 43 × 34 cm.
Sold, Dorotheum, 24 March 2004, lot 382 (as attr. C. Roepel).

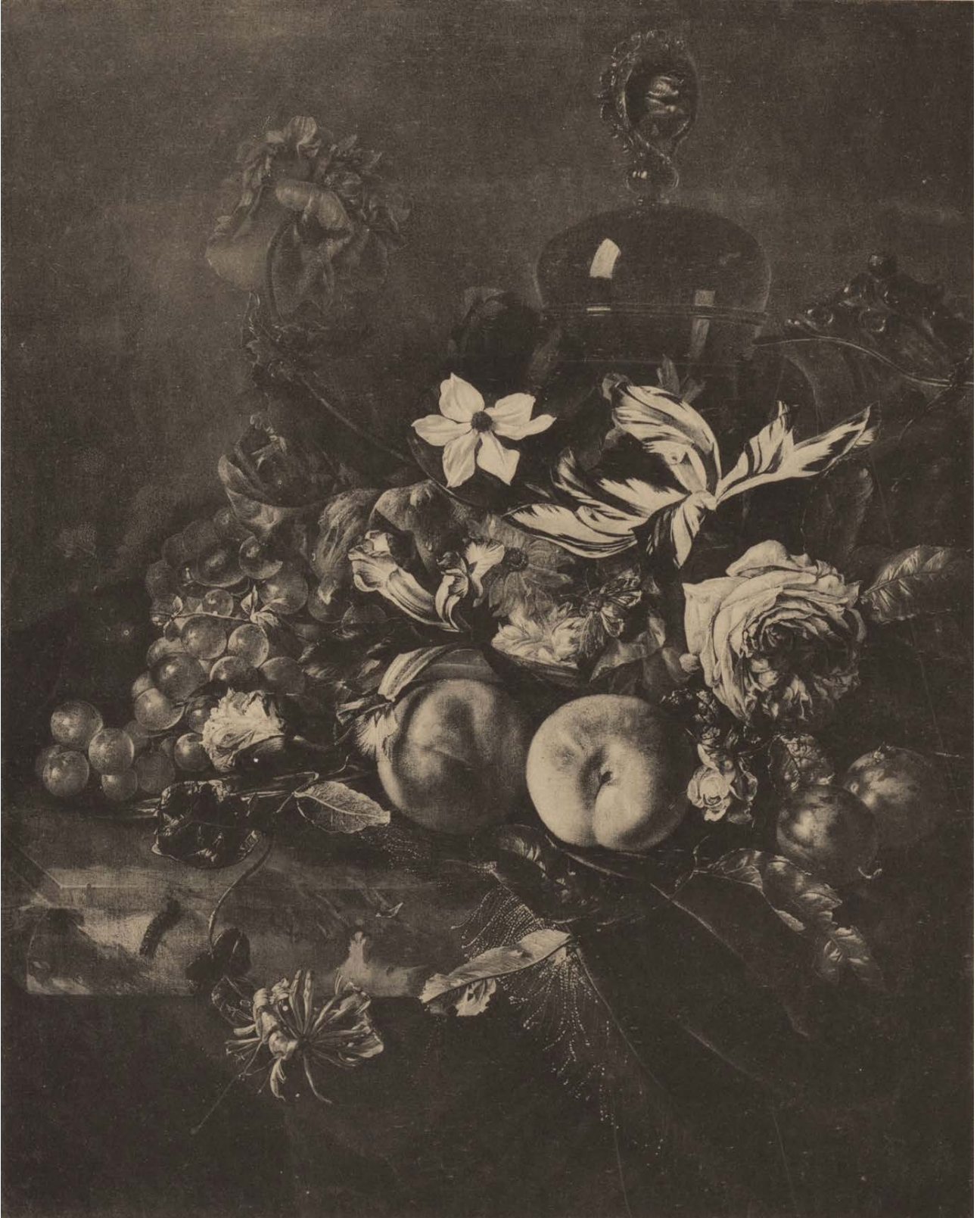


Fig. 5. Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Fruit and Lidded Goblet*, Oil on canvas, 68 × 54 cm.
Sold, Cologne, Heberle, 4-5 June 1894, lot 322.



Fig. 6. Jan Weenix, *Flower Still Life*, Oil on canvas.
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

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Fig. 7. Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Nautilus Cup*, Oil on canvas, 123 × 95.5 cm.
With R. Stacy-Marks, Eastbourne, 1957.

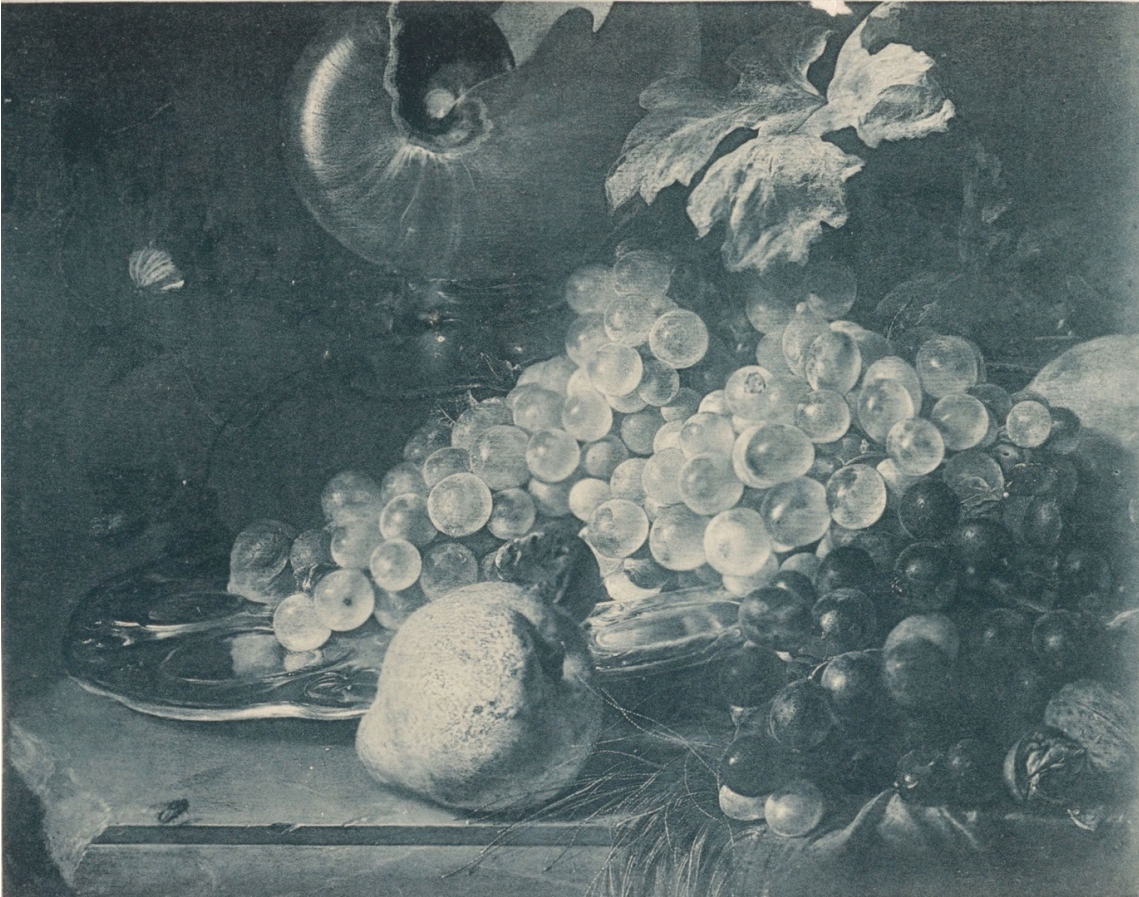


Fig. 8. Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Nautilus Cup* (fragment, signed), Oil on canvas, 34 × 44 cm. Sold, Berlin, Lepke, 12 October 1909, lot 53.



Fig. 9. Jan Weenix, *Game Piece*, signed and dated 1682 (or 1683), Oil on canvas, 125 × 103 cm. Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, inv. 348.