

PAN

AMSTERDAM

LAWRENCE STEIGRAD FINE ARTS



A Young Fish Seller

signed and dated AB (with the first two initials conjoined) Vander Schoor . 1657 . in the lower center on the table's edge
oil on canvas
20.48 x 25.59 inches (52 x 65 cm.)

PROVENANCE

presumably, Anonymous sale, Edward Foster, London, November 21, 1822, lot 20 (Van der Schoor, Boy with Fish: very fine) where bought by

Watting

Anonymous sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, Ltd., London, July 31, 1947, lot 237 where bought by

Hartveld

American Private Collection, until the present time

LITERATURE

- presumably, Hofstede de Groot Fiches, card no. 1492121, box no. 238 at data.rkd.nl/collections/351
- Peter van den Brink, "Aelbert van der Schoor, een Utrechts schilder en zijn werk" in *Oud Holland*, CVIII, 1994, pp. 38-39, 41, no. 7, illustrated, p. 56 catalogue no. 26 (as location unknown)
- Erika Gemar – Koeltzsch, "Abraham van der Schoor" in *Holländische Stillebenmaler im 17. Jahrhundert*, volume 3, Luca Verlag, Lingen, 1995, p. 908, no. 358/2
- Peter van den Brink, "Aelbert van der Schoor, een Utrechts schilder en zijn werk", in *Jaarboek Oud Utrecht*, 1998, p. 144, no. 5, illustrated, pp. 147, 161, no. 29 (as location unknown)
- Adriaan van der Willigen & Fred G. Meijer, "Aelbert van der Schoor" in *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-Life Painters Working in Oils, 1525 – 1725*, Primavera Press, Leiden, 2003, p. 179
- Fred G. Meijer, "Fish Still Lifes in Holland and Flanders", pp. 50-51, fig. 35, illustrated, (as location unknown) and "Compendium of Painters of Fish Still Lifes", p. 423, in *Still Lifes by Dutch and Flemish Masters 1550 – 1700*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 2004

Aelbert van der Schoor[1] was the son of Jan Laurensz van der Schoor and Christina Everts. The names of his masters are unknown although it has been suggested that he trained with Abraham Bloemaert. He is documented as being in Utrecht between 1620 and 1672. He is also known to have worked at times in other places including Dordrecht and perhaps Enkhuizen. His earliest works date from the start of the 1640s, and he specialized in painting portraits, Caravaggesque historical scenes, and genre, plus a few interiors and vanitas still lifes (e.g., Rijksmuseum, *Vanitas Still Life*, inventory no. SK-A-1342). Dated still lifes are known from 1650 to 1662. Yet above all works depicting fish were among his favorite subjects.[2]

Although details of Van der Schoor's life are sparse, it is known that in 1652 the banns were posted for his marriage to Elizabeth Jacobs de Blom of Dordrecht. But the wedding never happened as the bride feared that Van der Schoor was just interested in her money and backed out. The artist sued her for breach of promise, "taking the case through all the courts." In 1654 the Supreme Court of Holland and Zeeland found in his favor and awarded him financial compensation. Shortly after his last known dated work in 1662, Van der Schoor was committed to the Utrecht house of correction and by 1666 the city's asylum where he remained for the rest of his life.[3]

Utrecht as well as The Hague constituted the most important centers for fish still life painting in the Dutch Republic.[4] Van der Schoor's fish still lifes were influenced by other Utrecht artists such as Jan de Bont and Willem Ormea.[5] These works emphasized a variety of fish on display as well as a rendering of their various textures, "converting into paint the visible slipperiness, moistness, the sheen and shine of scales". The importance of the fishing industry at the time to the Dutch economy cannot be overstated employing large swaths of the population. Further people ate a large amount of fish if they could afford it as it was costly.[6] Specimens of dried fish also formed part of collector's cabinets along with other aquatic objects such as shells and coral, and this fascination by quite a large number of naturalists necessitated detailed precise painted images of the various species. Thus "the popularity of fish painting may be understood in this context of the trade, consumption and knowledge".[7]

In our painting a young blond boy dressed in red motions the viewer into his stall to inspect the variety of fish spilling out of straw baskets. Van der Schoor's works were characterized by "a clear and vivid use of color" and distinctive monumental, plastic figures both of which are key elements in this composition. When Peter van den Brink compiled the catalogue raisonné of Van der Schoor's known oeuvre in 1994 they numbered thirty but added that he felt the output must have been larger. Works included in the list that had previously been given to Theodore Rombouts, Dirck van Baburen, Abraham Bloemaert or Jan Gerritz van Bronckhorst led Van den Brink to conclude "that fresh additions will be made to his oeuvre within due course".[8] To date few others have come to light and that is why we are particularly pleased to present *A Young Fish Seller* after vanishing from sight 77 years ago.

[1] Name variations of the painter include Abraham van der Schoor, Alebrecht van der Schoor, Aelbrecht Jansz van der Schor, and erroneously recording the painter as Abraham van der Schoor. See “Aelbert Jansz. Van der Schoor” on rkd.nl (RKD Explore) website.

[2] Fred G. Meijer, *op.cit.*, 2004, p. 423; and Aelbert Jansz. Van der Schoor, rkd.nl, *op.cit.*

[3] M.J. Bok, “Het leven van der schilder Aelbert van der Schoor” in *Oud Holland*, CVIII, 1994, p. 64.

[4] Marlise Rijks, “A Taste for Fish: Paintings of Aquatic Animals in the Low Countries (1560 – 1729)” in *Ichthyology in Context (1500 – 1880)*, on Brill, 2023

[5] Peter van den Brink, 1992, *op.cit.*, p. 72.

[6] Eddy de Jongh, “The Symbolism of Fish, Fisherman, Fishing Gear and the Catch”, pp. 77, 88 and Johanna Maria van Winter, “Fish Recipes in Late – Medieval and Early – Modern Cookbooks” in *Still Lifes by Dutch and Flemish Masters 1550 – 1700*, *op.cit.*

[7] Marlise Rijks, *op.cit.*

[8] Peter van den Brink, 1994, *op.cit.*, p. 72.