

KLAAS MULLER

J A N F Y T

Still life with Hunting Game and a Cat

The large dimensions of this work may indicate that it was intended for a hunting room or even a hunting lodge. In the 17th century, hunting was still a noble privilege and it was very prestigious to decorate a separate room with only hunting still lifes and scenes. The birds could be a metaphor for the sky, the hare (a very popular element with Fyt) for the earth. The cat (usually a symbol for the evil in mankind) is ready to take its share of the dead game. Fyt paints a work that is stylistically very modern and quite unconvincing; with broad brown tones, taking up space and a very loose touch.

Unsurprisingly, after his stay in Italy he inspired Neapolitan masters such as Guiseppe Recco, among others, and contributed a lot to the Italian still-life painting from the second half of the 17th century.

Besides Frans Snyders and Paul De Vos, Jan Fyt was the most important Flemish animal painter of the 17th century. The painter came from a family from Sint-Niklaas and became a member of the Antwerp Sint-Luke Guild in 1630. After a long stay in Italy (Fyt was chairman of the "Bentvueghels" in Rome) and a stop in Paris, Fyt returned around 1641 to Antwerp where he ran a successful studio (his most famous student was Peter Boel). The influence of Jan Fyt's style on later painting was important.

Oil on Canvas,

We are grateful to Dr. Fred Meijer for having confirmed our painting as an original work by Jan Fyt.

17th century



Artist description:

Jan Fijt or Joannes Fyt was a Flemish Baroque painter of the Antwerp School and a pupil of Frans Snyders, draughtsman and etcher.

One of the leading still life and animaliers of the 17th century, he was known for his refined flower and fruit still lifes, depictions of animals, garland painting and lush hunting pieces, and combinations of these subgenres, such as game, flowers and fish under a festoon of flowers. He was probably the master of the prominent Pieter Boel, who worked in a style very similar to that of Fyt. Jacob Jordaens also called on Fijt to add animals to his works.