KLAAS MULLER

JAN BAPTIST LUST

Still Life with a Lobster

Jan-Baptist Lust, a 17th-century Flemish still-life painter, was admitted to the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp in 1649/50.

The work presented here was clearly influenced by Jan Davidsz de Heem. Only one painting was provisionally attributed to Jan-Baptist Lust to date: a small-format (20.1 x 27.7 cm) still life with lobster, fruit, and oysters on a laid table, but its signature is dubious (https://rkd.nl/images/239078, Dorotheum, Old Masters, 16.6.2011, lot 352, and Hampel, Munich 1.4.2022, lot 1375). That small-format still life may have preceded this larger work, which bears a clearly legible and authentic signature „Lust"; on the edge of the table.

The artist presents a bright-red lobster dominantly placed on a draped white cloth, accompanied by a bowl of lemons on the left and a plate with grapes and oysters on the right. The dark background suggests a vessel and other lemons. The lighting allows the objects in the foreground to stand out dramatically and creates a strong contrast with the dark background, creating a calm and contemplative atmosphere typical of still lifes as a reflection on luxury and transience.

Dr. Fred Meijer confirms the authenticity of the painting and points out that it can be attributed to Jan-Baptist Lust only, not Carstian Luyckx, as previously suggested (cf. Sotheby's Milan, 9.6.2009, lot 44). Several painters by the name Lust are known, but they differ stylistically. The work shows parallels to work by Jan Davidsz. de Heem and by the artist G. van Deynum. This corresponds with the fact that Jan-Baptist Lust was registered in the Antwerp Guild of St. Luke in 1649/50 as a pupil of Andrea Benedetti (of whose style the small painting mentioned above is reminiscent), who in turn was a pupil of Jan Davidsz. de Heem.

Oil on Canvas, 75.5 x 90 cm

Signed centre left on the edge of the table top: *Lust.*

