

## References

- 1959 NGA: 15 repro.  
1965a NGA: 71, no. 745.  
1965b NGA: no. 15, repro.  
1968 NGA: 63, no. 745 repro.  
1974 Grisebach: 114–115, 122, 130, 258, no. 102, repro.  
116.

- 1975 NGA: 184–185, repro.  
1985 NGA: 213, repro.  
1986 Sutton: 309.  
1983 Grimm: 223, repro.  
1991 Ydema: 161, no. 455.

## After Willem Kalf

1974.109.1 (2676)

### *Still Life with Nautilus Cup*

1665/1670

Oil on canvas, 68.2 x 58 (26<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 22<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>)

Gift of Robert H. and Clarice Smith

#### Inscriptions

At lower left on edge of table (probably by another hand):  
*W. Kalf*

**Technical Notes:** The support, a medium-weight, tightly and plain-woven fabric, is composed of irregularly spun threads and was originally stretched off-square. It has been lined with the tacking margins trimmed, although cusping present along all edges suggests that the original dimensions have been retained.

Paint is applied over a smooth, thin beige ground in thin fluid layers, with thinned liquid washes and full-bodied pastes employed to simulate surface texture. Smooth surfaces were rendered with highlights blended wet into wet, while a finger was used to texture the orange peel. Dark passages such as the background are moderately abraded, particularly the darker design elements of the rug and sugar bowl. Minor losses are scattered at random. The signature at the lower left crosses over drying crackle but not the age cracks. It was added after the paint had dried, presumably by another hand. No conservation has been carried out since acquisition.

**Provenance:** Possibly G. L. M. van Es, Wassenaar.<sup>1</sup> Probably Colonel Towers. (Leonard Koetser, London); (Edward Speelman, London, in 1946); (Pieter de Boer, Amsterdam, probably in 1950). Mr. W. Reineke, Amersfoort, 1958–1968; (Pieter de Boer, Amsterdam, and Newhouse, London); sold by (Newhouse, London) 21 January 1969 to Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Smith, Washington.

**Exhibited:** 1948 *Exhibition of Dutch and Flemish Masters*, Eugene Slatter Gallery, London, 1948, no. 13.<sup>2</sup> *Zomertoonstelling 1950*, Pieter de Boer Gallery, Amsterdam, 1950. *Kunstbeziit rondom Laren*, Singer Museum, Laren, 1958, no. 106. *Nederlandse stillevens uit de zeventiende eeuw*, Dordrechts Museum, 1962, no. 65.

KALF'S RENOWN as an artist was such that he was eulogized in verse during his own lifetime by Jan Vos and Joost van den Vondel and written about enthusiastically in the early eighteenth century by Gerard de Lairese and Arnold Houbraken.<sup>3</sup> Although these sources provide some insight into the character of his art, they say nothing about his workshop practice. Likewise, no mention is made of students, although some artists, particularly Jurriaen van Streeck (c. 1622–1683), come so close to him in style and composition that it seems improbable that they did not spend some time in his studio.<sup>4</sup> The issue is of some consequence because two or three versions of certain of Kalf's compositions do exist. While later imitations may also have been made, it would have been consistent with seventeenth-century workshop practice for studio assistants, perhaps with the aid of the master, to make replicas of the master's most successful compositions. Even without documentary evidence to confirm the existence of a Kalf workshop, these replicas suggest that he worked with various assistants, particularly during his Amsterdam years.<sup>5</sup>

Despite exhibiting all the characteristics of a Kalf composition, *Still Life with Nautilus Cup* must be one of these replicas.<sup>6</sup> The differences in handling between this work and an authentic work by the master are clear in a comparison with the National Gallery's *Still Life* (1943.7.8), where many of the same objects appear (figs. 1 and 2). The most obvious difference between the two is in the depiction of the lemon rind. In Kalf's own hand the rind has a three-dimensional presence as it twists and turns in space. Its edges are carefully wrought to show both the irregular cut of the knife and the thickness of the skin. Finally, the rough texture of the skin has been recreated with sure touches of the brush. The illusionism is so complete that the paint seems to take on

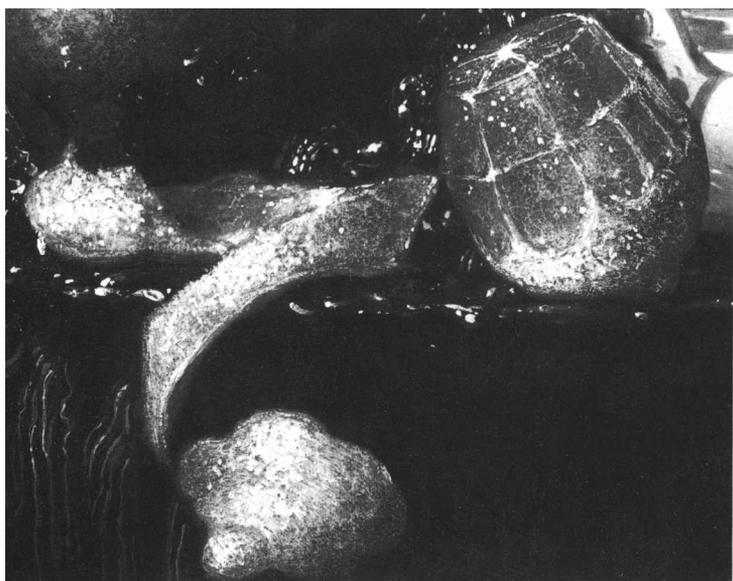


Fig. 1. Detail of lemon in 1974.109.1



Fig. 2. Detail of lemon in Willem Kalf, *Still Life*, 1662.7.8

the character of the skin itself. The lemon peel in the replica exhibits none of these characteristics. Form is simplified, edges give no hint of the rind's thickness, and paint highlights sit on the surface, doing little to create the sense of texture. Comparable differences in technique are evident in comparisons with the peeled lemon, the Seville orange, and the tapestry.<sup>7</sup> Grisebach, who, in 1974, was the first to recognize that *Still Life with Nautilus Cup* was a replica, considered Kalf's original composition to be a painting formerly on the art market.<sup>8</sup> This painting, however, is also a replica, but by a different hand.<sup>9</sup> As seems to have happened in a number of instances, Kalf's original is lost.<sup>10</sup>

The compositional components of this work indicate that Kalf's original composition was executed in the late 1660s.<sup>11</sup> Although the blue and white Wan-Li porcelain bowl, decorated with colored biscuit figures representing the eight immortals of Taoist belief, is already found in Kalf's paintings from the early 1660s, most prominently in his *Still Life with Nautilus Cup* of 1662 (Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid),<sup>12</sup> the unusual nautilus cup appears only later in the decade.<sup>13</sup> This cup consists of a polished turban shell mounted on an elaborately wrought, gilded-silver base made in the form of a putto holding a horn of plenty.<sup>14</sup> While the turban shell was particularly prized for its mother-of-pearl luminosity, its shape, with the symbolic association with a horn of plenty, made it a particularly appro-

priate focal point for Kalf's image of wealth and prosperity.<sup>15</sup>

#### Notes

1. Noted in Grisebach 1974, 279. As the author mentions, however, the painting did not appear in the sale of the Van Es collection on 16–17 March 1943. Subsequent provenance was provided by the dealers who owned the painting for periods between 1946 and 1969 (letters in NGA curatorial files).

2. According to a letter from Edward Speelman (in NGA curatorial files), the picture belonged to him at the time of this 1948 exhibition to benefit the National Art-Collections Fund. The catalogue, however, makes no mention of past or present owners.

3. For Jan Vos' poem, written in 1654, see Grisebach 1974, 21; for Vondel's poem, published in 1663, see Grisebach 1974, 32. See also Houbraken 1753, 2: 218–219; and De Lairese 1740, 266–268.

4. Jurriaen's brother, Hendrick van Streeck (1650–1712), also painted in the manner of Kalf. For a discussion of artists working in Kalf's manner, see Blok 1919, 143–145.

5. Grisebach 1974 attributes 147 paintings unreservedly to Kalf. He also lists various copies of these works, copies of lost originals, questionable works, and wrongly attributed paintings. He does not, however, discuss the workshop problem. Segal 1988, 180–181, writes that Kalf, "like De Heem, allowed his pupils to make copies of his paintings to which he himself would add the finishing touches. Besides numerous copies by others, we also know of contemporary replicas signed by Kalf himself." Segal, however, does not present the evidence for his claim.

6. The signature is no assurance of authenticity as it is a later addition (see Technical Notes).

7. Similar comparisons can be made with other paintings



After Willem Kalf, *Still Life with Nautilus Cup*, 1974.109.1

containing identical objects, such as the blue-and-white Chinese bowl in Kalf's *Still Life with Nautilus Cup* in the Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza.

8. Grisebach 1974, 279, cat. 140a. He gives no reason for having determined this work to be a copy. The attribution has also been doubted verbally by Ingvar Bergström, Sam Segal, Claus Grimm, and Fred G. Meijer.

9. Sir Geoffrey Agnew letter, 9 January 1976, in NGA curatorial files, indicates that after they had acquired this painting at Sotheby's in 1964, they determined after restoration that it was an "old copy" (see Sotheby sale catalogue, 11 March 1964, lot 70, repro.). They subsequently sold the painting at auction on 18 August 1970. Its present location is unknown.

10. See, for example, Grisebach 1974, 286, cat. nos. B6, B7, B8.

11. Grisebach 1974, 279, however, explained the weakness of the painting he considered to be the original by dating it to the end of Kalf's career: "Qualitativ stellenweise recht schwaches Spatwerk."

12. For an illustration, see Gaskell 1989, cat. 10, 74–77.

13. For example, see his *Still Life with Nautilus Cup* (Muse-

um der bildenden Künste, Leipzig). Grisebach 1974, 160, 276–277, cat. 136, repro. 135, dates this painting to the late 1660s because of the dark tonality and the prevalence of gold tonalities in the work.

14. Timothy Anglin Burgard letter, 10 January 1989, in NGA curatorial files.

15. While the bases of the Leipzig and National Gallery paintings are similar, slight differences do occur. The turban shell, for example, sits directly on the head and hand of the putto in the Leipzig painting, whereas in the National Gallery painting it is raised above the putto by three circular forms. Such free adaptations in the shapes of objects are common in Kalf's paintings; a variant of this same base is used as a support for a glass in his *Still Life* of 1663 in the Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. no. 62.292; see Segal 1988, 195, 249, cat. 56).

#### References

- 1965 "Les cours de ventes": 159–167, repro. no. 12.  
1974 Grisebach: 279, as copy of no. 140.  
1985 NGA: 213, repro.

## Philip van Kouwenbergh

1671–1729

PHILIP VAN KOUWENBERGH, the son of Frans van Kouwenbergh, a sculptor, was baptized in Amsterdam in the Nieuwe Kerk on 25 February 1671. On 11 September 1694 he was betrothed to Cornelia van der Mars, whom he married on 26 September 1694.<sup>1</sup> The first of their three sons, Wilhelmus [Willem], was born the following spring and baptized in the Nieuwe Kerk on 6 March. On 31 January 1721 Philip and Willem became burghers in Amsterdam. Having outlived his wife by almost ten years, Philip was buried in the Noorderkerkhof on 11 March 1729.

The few paintings known by Van Kouwenbergh are either flower paintings or woodland scenes containing ruins, flowers, and insects. While no information about his artistic training exists, Meijer has suggested that Van Kouwenbergh might have studied with the still-life painter Elias van den Broeck (c. 1650–1708). Van den Broeck, having returned from Antwerp in 1685, was active in Amsterdam at the time Van Kouwenbergh would have been learning his trade. Documents indicate that Van Kouwenbergh's paintings were on the market by 1694, so he had probably become an independent master by the time of his betrothal.

#### Notes

1. S.A.C. Dudok van Heel letter 3 September 1976, in NGA curatorial files. For biographical information on the artist see Meijer 1988a.

#### Bibliography

Meijer 1988a.

1976.26.2 (2695)

### *Flowers in a Vase*

c. 1700

Oil on canvas, 67 x 51 (26¾ x 19¾)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Draper Blair

#### Inscriptions

At lower right (damaged): [P] Kouwe[ ]be[ ]h

**Technical Notes:** The support, a heavy-weight, loosely and plain-woven fabric, has been lined with the tacking margins removed. Cusping is visible along all edges. Colored imprimaturas were applied locally over a fawn-colored ground. Thin, fluid paint layers are subtly blended, exploiting darker underlayers, and modified with light glazes and scumbles. The fading of a fugitive yellow pigment imparts a blue tonality to the leaves, which overlap the completed vase.