

**Juriaen van Streeck**

? 1632 – 1687 Amsterdam

*Still Life with a Roemer, an Orange and a Chestnut*Signed *JvS.f.*

Oil on panel

37 x 28.5 cm.

**Provenance**

France, private collection

Juriaen van Streeck's birthplace is unknown, but Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719), the first author to speak of him in his *Groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, correctly gives his year of birth as 1632.<sup>1</sup> Van Streeck is first documented in Amsterdam in 1653, where he seems to have been active all his life. Two years later, in 1655, Juriaen married Grietje Claersdr. Their son Hendrick, who was to become a painter himself, was born in Amsterdam in 1659, and received his first drawing lessons from his father. In 1680 Van Streeck seems to have switched careers, becoming an innkeeper. At the time of his death in 1687, he was living at the Prinsengracht. Although he was fundamentally a still life painter, several *tronies* by Van Streeck are also known. In spite of being referred to as a portrait painter, no portraits of his are known of today. The fact that his works appear in the collections of such prominent Amsterdam citizens as Nicolaes Bambeeck and the Reynst and Trip families, testifies to the artist's success.

The present, hitherto unpublished work depicts an unadorned stone ledge and support, on which Van Streeck has placed a somewhat bleak looking orange with one leaf, an orange slice, a *roemer* half-filled with wine and, in the right background, a chestnut. A knife protrudes over the left edge of the ledge. Set against a greenish-grey monochrome background and lit from the left, this still life, scanty as it is, conveys a subtle, modest sophistication. One would not be surprised if Houbraken had just this work in mind, when he wrote the following about Juriaen's art: 'He chose as his subjects all sorts of still life [...] which he composed with such good judgement, that one [object] balanced out another very well. He observed his light and browns admirably well, and had a bold brush ['stout penceel'], letting the power of his brushwork to measure itself against nature.'<sup>2</sup> Quite possibly Juriaen's most austere composition, the work under discussion here indeed relies to a large extent on a rather refined balance in the positioning of the objects in the picture plane. The



atmospheric lighting allows Van Streeck to exercise his abilities in the rendering of reflections and the citrus peel.

Although nothing is known about Van Streeck's teacher, his oeuvre shows a clear affinity to the work of the Rotterdam born Willem Kalf (1619-1693), Van Streeck's senior by 13 years, who, like Van Streeck, was first reported as being in Amsterdam in 1653, where he worked until his death. Although Kalf is renowned for his sumptuous still lifes, some of his works show a more sober inclination. In his *Still Life with a Roemer, a Lemon and an Orange*, now in the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, Kalf seems to be experimenting with a similar set of objects on a stone table top, in a format which is highly comparable to Van Streeck's work.<sup>3</sup> His forms, still, are more decorative, especially in the curl of the peeled lemon, and his unequalled talent thrives him, even more than Van Streeck, to a brilliant description of the different textures. Kalf may have been aware of the work of his colleague Jan Jansz van de Velde III (1619/1620-in or after 1662), who lived and worked in Amsterdam from 1642 onwards. A 1649 dated *Still Life with Roemer and Lemon* by the latter, painted in a small format consistent with the works by Kalf and Van Streeck, was thus painted in Amsterdam and could well have fuelled Kalf's inspiration for his Karlsruhe work, as was suggested by Fred Meijer.<sup>4</sup> Van Streeck, likewise, may have been aware of Van de Velde's work. When one considers the composition of their respective works, it seems that all these painters were well aware of each other's progression.

Van Streeck experimented with the possibilities of composition in another painting, whose present whereabouts are unknown. His *Still Life of an Orange, a Lemon and a Roemer on a Table* showcases objects seen in the present work, with the addition of a tablecloth.<sup>5</sup> Making up for a beautiful composition, the work lacks the ardent sobriety of the present composition. By choosing, for the present work, the simplest square stone tabletop, and by omitting any table cloth, peeled lemon or decorative vase, Van Streeck created an image which, in an astutely modern way, consists largely of geometrical forms, only to be desecrated by the orange's leaf. That said, it's also Van Streeck's 'stout penceel' that ensures the work's captivating directness.

JH

- 1 For biographical references, see: A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., The Hague 1718-1721, II, pp. 290, 292; A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare : Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIIten, XVIIIten und XIXten Jahrhunderts*, 8 vols., The Hague 1915-1922, IV (1917), pp. 1333-1342; A. von Wurzbach, *Niederländisches Künstler-Lexikon : auf Grund archivalischer Forschungen bearbeitet*, 3 vols., Vienna/Leipzig 1904-1911, 2 (1910), p. 670; U. Thieme, F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexicon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 37 vols., Leipzig 1907-1950, 32 (1938), pp. 176-177; A. van der Willigen, F.G. Meijer, *A dictionary of Dutch and Flemish still-life painters working in oils, 1525-1725*, Leiden 2003, p. 191.
- 2 Houbraken 1718-1721, II, p. 290: 'Hy verkoos tot zyn voorwerpen allerhande soort van Stilleven [...] 'T welk hy met zulk een goed oordeel' zamenschikte, dat het een tegens het ander zyn behoorlyke werking deed. Zyn licht en bruin wist hy wonder wel waar te nemen, en had een stout penceel, waar door zyn penceelwerk in kragt tegen de natuur dorst ter monstering komen.'
- 3 Signed, oil on canvas, 36.5 x 30.8 cm., Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, , inv. no. 2585. See: S. Böhmer, in: J. Giltaij et al., *Willem Kalf 1619-1693*, exh. cat., Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Aachen, Suermond-Ludwig-Museum 2006-2007, cat. no. 34.
- 4 Signed and dated 1949, oil on panel, 31 x 24.5 cm., Basel, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung. See: F. Meijer, in: Rotterdam/Aachen 2006-2007, p. 95, fig. 5.
- 5 Signed *JV. Streeck.f.*, oil on panel, 53.5 x 40.5 cm., sale London, Sotheby's, April 9, 1986, lot 44.



Detail of cat. no. 11