

Strikingly beautiful still life worth more than £6 million at risk of leaving UK

- Export bar is to allow time for a UK gallery or institution to acquire the painting
- Worth more than £6 million, this rare painting is on an impressive scale and by one of the most important still life painters of the 17th century

Banquet Still Life by Jan Davidsz. de Heem, which is valued at £6,109,200, is at risk of leaving the country unless a UK buyer can be found.

One of the most important still life painters in the 17th century, de Heem was typically known for smaller paintings, making this monumental work incredibly rare within his body of work and one of just four he completed of this size, all done between 1640 and 1643.

It is a beautiful and impressive example of Dutch ornate still life painting known as 'pronkstilleven', and shows de Heem excelled in the depiction of forms and textures.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

This captivating painting is magnificent not just in size but also in its exquisite detail. De Heem's enormous talent is evident in this rare piece and I hope a buyer comes forward so it may be enjoyed and appreciated by viewers in the UK for many years to come.

The Minister's decision follows the advice of the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest](#) (RCEWA). The Committee agreed the sumptuous detail of each of the elements and the extraordinarily realistic rendering of a variety of materials and textures made this an outstanding example of the pronkstilleven style composition the artist made uniquely his own. The possibility this was produced as a commission, potentially location-specific, added to its interest. In addition, the Committee found the painting's long provenance in a single collection remarkable.

Committee Member Christopher Baker said:

De Heem's splendid still life combines grandeur in terms of its scale with numerous exquisitely wrought details that encourage close looking. Man-made and natural wonders, such as Chinese porcelain and exotic fruits, tumble across the canvas, conveying great wealth and the pursuit of luxury, but also perhaps implicitly

that the pleasures they signify are ephemeral. It is one of a group of works by the painter created in Antwerp in the early 1640s, which through their ambition and complexity marked not only a new phase in the development of his career but also a leap forward in the evolution of still life painting and its sumptuous possibilities.

The artist's magnificent pictures of this type appealed to distinguished collectors: an example in the Louvre had by the 1680s been acquired by Louis XIV. In this case the original patron is yet to be identified and the painting has only recently been re-discovered by art historians; it has however been in a private UK collection since the early nineteenth century and every effort should be made to retain it so it might delight and interest and benefit British gallery visitors.

The Committee made its recommendation on the grounds the painting's departure from the UK would be a misfortune because it is of outstanding aesthetic importance.

The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred until 20 April 2022. At the end of the first deferral period owners will have a consideration period of 15 business days to consider any offer(s) to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £6,109,200 (inclusive of VAT). The second deferral period will commence following the signing of an Option Agreement and will last for six months.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the painting should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.
2. Details of the painting are as follows: Jan Davidsz. de Heem (Utrecht 1606–1684 Antwerp) A Banquet Still Life Inscribed and signed 'V. E otmoedigen/ J-D heem.' (lower right, on the paper) Oil on canvas, 155 x 211 cm.
3. Provenance: (Probably) Anonymous sale; F. J. Bosboom, The Hague, 9 October 1805, lot 24 (30 guilders to Ph. Meij). (Probably) Anonymous sale; C. S. Roos, Amsterdam, 29 April 1817, lot 32 (41 guilders to Smaadt). Private collection, England, by the early 19th century, and thence by descent.
4. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by the Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
5. [Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of

us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. Following the [Covid-19 crisis](#), the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. They are also one of the bodies administering the Government's unprecedented £1.96 billion Culture Recovery Funds.