

Dirk Salm (Amsterdam 1803 - Amsterdam 1838)

Three Feathers

Watercolour, grey wash and pencil, heightened with gum arabic, with framing lines in pencil and black ink.
Signed Dirk Salm. at the lower right.
144 x 197 mm. (5 5/8 x 7 3/4 in.)

A very similar study of five bird feathers by Dirk Salm was at one time in the collection of Jan Frederick Bianchi in Amsterdam, and was exhibited alongside the present sheet in The Hague in 1942. The ex-Bianchi drawing was signed and dated 1828, and this study of three feathers may therefore also be dated to approximately the same year. Another closely related watercolour by Salm is a study of three feathers in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

A stylistically comparable pair of watercolour drawings of sea shells by Salm, dated 1827 and 1829, was formerly in the collection of Hans van Leeuwen, while a signed pen and wash study of five sea shells, at one time in the collection of Paul Brandt, appeared at auction in Germany in 2010. A signed watercolour of six sea shells by the artist was also once with Paul Brandt in Amsterdam, and was exhibited with the present sheet in Dordrecht in 1959.

The depiction of bird feathers as still-life subjects is also occasionally found in the work of some of Dirk Salm's contemporaries; a similar watercolour study of nine feathers by Josephus Augustus Knip (1777-1847) is in the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, for example, while a pencil and chalk drawing of a single feather, dated 1825, by Jean Bernard (1765-1833) is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Provenance:

Iohan Quirijn van Regteren Altena, Amsterdam (his posthumous sale stamp [Lugt 4617] partially stamped on the verso)
Thence by descent.

Exhibitions

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, Nederlandsche Aquarellen van 1780-1830, 1942, no.101; Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum, Bekoring van het kleine, 1959-1960, no.74.

Literature:

Laurens J. Bol, Bekoring van het kleine, exhibition catalogue, Dordrecht, 1959-1960, p.37, no.74, illustrated pl.19.

Artist description:

An amateur still life painter, Dirk Salm (sometimes van Salm or Zalm) worked for the whole of his brief career in Amsterdam. Very little is known of his life and career, or indeed his main occupation. He exhibited still life subjects, often of seashells, in Amsterdam in 1824, 1826, 1830 and 1836, and also in The Hague in 1830. Drawings by Salm are very rare, and examples are in the collections of the Rijksprentenkabinet in Amsterdam and the Rijksmuseum Kroller-Müller in Otterlo.