

VAN GOGH EXPERTS



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STATEMENT OF FINDINGS



FIGURE 1 THE SUBJECT WORK

8/12/2019

Study of a painting: addendum

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PRÉCIS

SCOPE OF WORK Addendum to Study of Findings prepared on 7/25/2019.

DESCRIPTION Oil on canvas, 73 x 100 centimeters, showing a flower market scene. No signature is perceptible on the recto side.

PROVENANCE KNOWN TO CLIENT According to notes provided to Van Gogh Experts, the client purchased the painting from a now-closed art gallery in Caracas, Venezuela.

Statement of Findings

STUDY OF A PAINTING

According to notes provided by the client to Van Gogh Experts, the subject work was purchased in Caracas around 20 years ago, which would put the time of purchase in approximately 1999. However, the date written in ink on the stretcher on the verso side is 1965, or 54 years ago, almost three times as long ago as was originally indicated in the notes file.

It is common practice among art galleries to write in ink, grease pencil or chalk, or to attach a paper label to the back of paintings as a means of keeping track of stock. It is not remarkable that Van Gogh Experts was led to conclude that the gallery itself labeled the painting as a Dutch scene, given the ubiquity of this practice, and it was not revealed in the original notes file that the client's father had done so in order to ensure his property was properly identified as belonging to him.

It is, however, but one small piece of presumed evidence, and it was not given **greater** weight or credence than other forms of evidence. Signature analysis is commonly relied upon as a way to suggest the possible identity of the creator of a painting, but an artist's signature is the easiest part of a picture to forge, and consequently analysts give a signature less weight than aspects such as palette, brush stroke, and historical details like biographical facts.

Van Gogh Experts analyzed the painting against known works by van Gogh and Lautrec in order to compare aspects including characteristic brush strokes, color choices in palette, subject matter, composition, and level of detail. Furthermore, Van Gogh Experts conducted a full examination of both artists' lives. At no time are the men have known to have collaborated with each other or with anyone else working in the late

19th century, and the subject work does not share any characteristics of artistic hand with either van Gogh or Lautrec, differing tremendously in both style and content. However, after exploring the genre of Dutch flower-market scenes set along the seaside, it became immediately clear that the subject work bears very strong

similarities to at least five other artists working in that genre, as stated on page 25 of the original report.

Since it is very clearly not a van Gogh, the question remains as to who is then responsible for the subject work. As indicated, there is evidence of a signature in dark paint in the lower right of the picture plane, described on page 9 in Figure 4. Unfortunately, the signature is not legible enough to determine its lettering due to the condition of the painting.

The presence of this signature was noted in the Milan lab report of 2011. Below are very large images taken from the 2011 report provided to Van Gogh Experts. The top image is the signature area in its original colors; the bottom example is the same area of the painting with the color de-saturated to enhance the contrast of the signature against the ground.



FIGURE 2: ENLARGED SIGNATURE AS TAKEN FROM **MILAN LAB REPORT OF 2011**, ORIGINAL COLOR

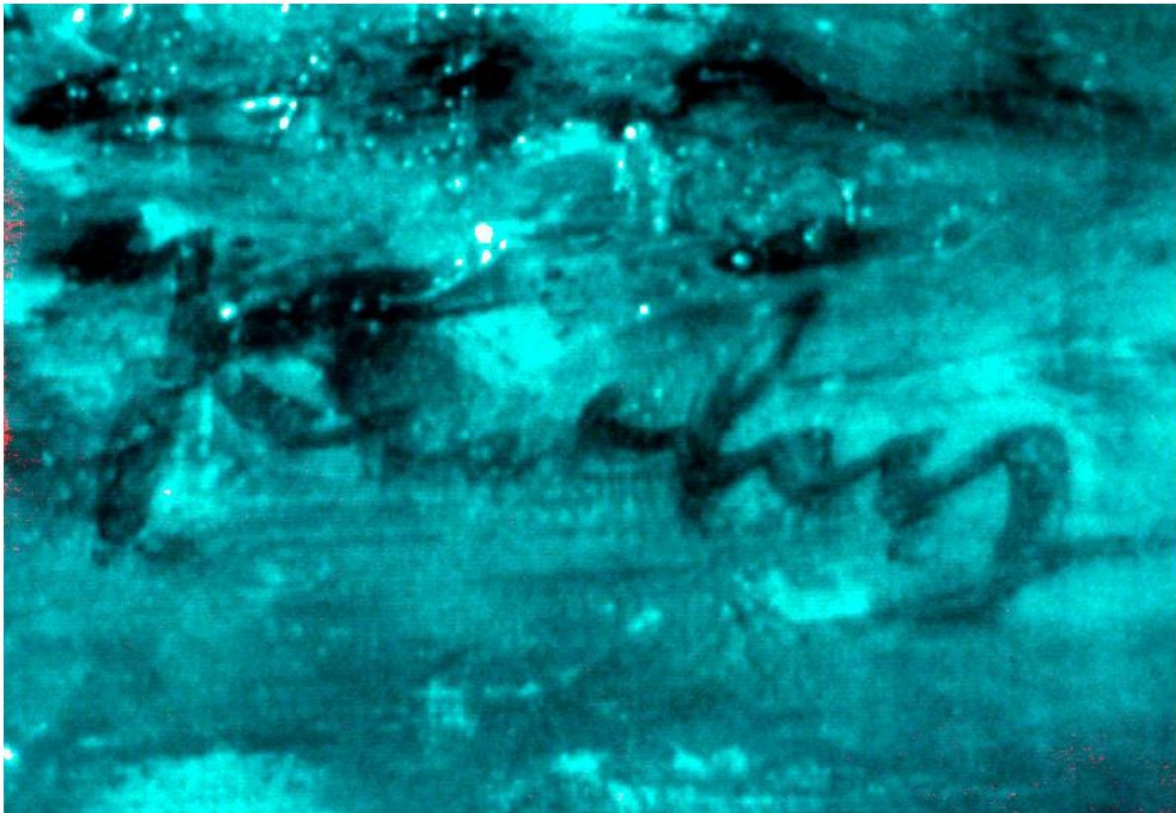


FIGURE 3: ENLARGED SIGNATURE AS TAKEN FROM **MILAN LAB REPORT OF 2011**, COLOR REMOVED

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If the artist were a well-known painter whose signature was very recognizable, it would be far easier to ascertain whose signature it is. Van Gogh customarily signed his work "Vincent," because, in his own words according to the collected letters we examined (noted in the bibliography of sources included in the original report as pages 11 and 12), he did not expect anyone to be able to pronounce "van Gogh."

Of the five artists that Van Gogh Experts mentioned on page 25 in the original report of 7/25/2019, Prucha seems the most likely as the potential signatory, though we cannot commit to the opinion that the subject work is definitely a Prucha, as the signature in the subject work is simply too unclear. At this time, Prucha's work is not collectible enough to put his name in wide distribution in printed compendia of artists' signatures. Prucha's paintings are chiefly found on auction sites, and the quality of the photographs made available to study Prucha's signature is unfortunately rather low. Van Gogh Experts provides a selection of Prucha's presumed signatures collected from auction sites around the world in the following series of images, with the aforementioned caveat.





FIGURE 4: A SELECTION OF PRUCHA SIGNATURES FROM AUCTION WEBSITES





FIGURE 5: A SELECTION OF PRUCHA SIGNATURES FROM AUCTION WEBSITES

Below is a side-by-side comparison of the signature that appears in the subject work, as well as the signature of Prucha reproduced from the artsignatures.com website, as seen above. Illegibility appears to be their common characteristic.



FIGURE 6: SIGNATURE FROM THE SUBJECT WORK



FIGURE 7: SIGNATURE OF GUSTAV PRUCHA FROM ARTSIGNATUREDICTIONARY.COM

F. Max Richter-Reich, Hans Richter-Johannsen, Hans Hermann, and H.M. Gabriel also painted genre pictures of Dutch flower markets, often set near the edge of a canal or other body of water, and featuring vendors in traditional Dutch costume. The work of Richter-Reich and Gabriel appears

in the original Van Gogh Experts report of July 2019 on pages 26 and 27, and their signatures are reproduced below from those featured paintings.



FIGURE 8: F. MAX RICHTER-REICH, DETAIL FROM BLUMENMARKT IN AMSTERDAM, 80 x 60 CM, NO DATE



FIGURE 9: H.M. GABRIEL, DETAIL FROM FLOWER SELLERS ON THE QUAY, OIL ON CANVAS, 68.6 x 55.9 CM, NO DATE

As stated in the original report, there are too many similarities to Dutch flower market genre scenes, available quite widely from many auction houses worldwide, to ignore the considerable commonalities between examples of them and the subject work. One of the most striking examples is the work of Gustav Prucha, as seen below, whose oeuvre includes Dutch peasants in traditional costumes, including the very distinctive wooden klompen shoes; sailboats bobbing in the water under a lambent sky, and bright flowers of every variety for sale, for which the Dutch were and are justly famous.



FIGURE 10, GUSTAV PRUCHA, FLOWER MARKET ON THE QUAY, 68.5 x 98.5 CM, NO DATE



FIGURE 11, THE SUBJECT WORK



FIGURE 12, GUSTAV PRUCHA, FLOWER MARKET ON THE QUAY, 68.5 x 98.5 CM, NO DATE

A side-by-side comparison makes this unmistakable similarity very plain. Van Gogh Experts confirms its original opinion given in July of 2019: the subject work is not a painting by Vincent van Gogh but is instead probably a late 19th or early 20th century genre painting by a minor artist, possibly but not definitely Gustav Prucha.

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This report comprises 11 (Eleven) pages.

The Art Research Department at Van Gogh Experts