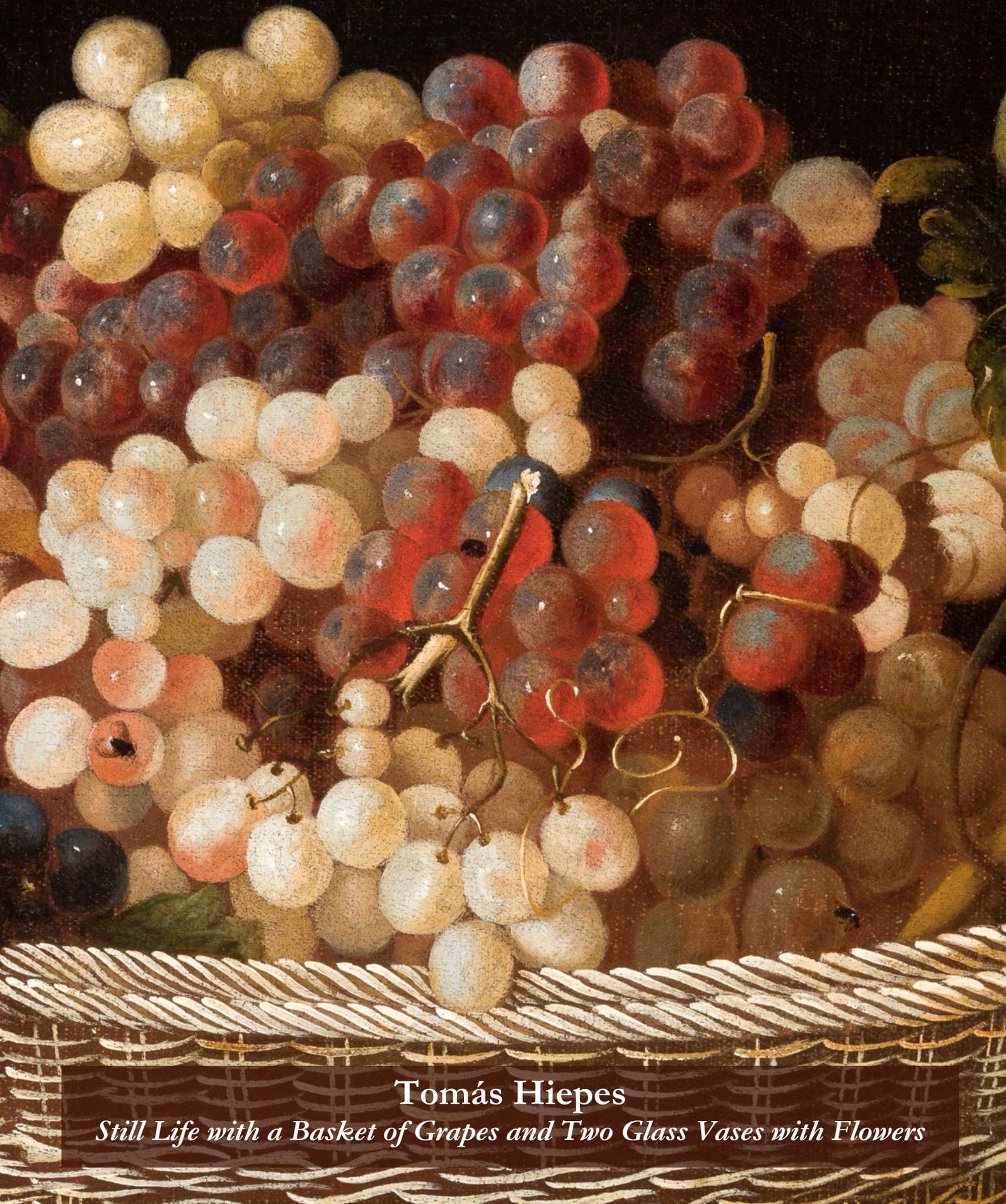


COLNAGHI



Tomás Hiepes

Still Life with a Basket of Grapes and Two Glass Vases with Flowers

COLNAGHI

TOMÁS HIEPES

(Valencia c. 1600 - 1674)

STILL LIFE WITH A BASKET OF GRAPES AND TWO GLASS VASES WITH FLOWERS

oil on canvas

65 x 89.5 cm; 25 5/8 x 35 1/4 in.

Provenance

Collection of the Duke of Valencia, Madrid, c. 1935;

Private collection, Madrid.

Literature

J. Cavestany, *Floreros y bodegones en la pintura española*, Madrid, 1936 and 1940, p. 154, no. 28 (as Juan Bautista de Espinosa).

A. E. Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura española de bodegones y floreros de 1600 a Goya*, Madrid, 1983–84, p. 58, no. 31 (as Juan Bautista de Espinosa).

P. Cherry, *Arte y Naturaleza: El bodegón español en el Siglo de Oro*, Madrid, 1999, fig. C.

Exhibition History

Palacio de la Biblioteca Nacional, *Floreros y bodegón en la pintura española*, Madrid, 1935, p. 154, no. 28 (as Juan Bautista de Espinosa).

Museo del Prado / Biblioteca Nacional, *Pintura española de bodegones y floreros de 1600 a Goya*, Madrid, 1983–84, no. 31 (as Juan Bautista de Espinosa).

COLNAGHI



LONDON

NEW YORK

MADRID

BRUSSELS

COLNAGHI

A capacious wicker basket, densely heaped with different grape clusters, is flanked by two glass vases each holding a bouquet of white lilies and smaller pink blossoms. The ensemble is set upon a shallow tabletop against a uniformly dark ground, suppressing depth in favour of legibility. A raking, left-to-right light articulates the forms with quiet precision: the bloom on the grape skins, the serrated edges of the vine leaves, and, above all, the meticulously woven structure of the basket. Placed symmetrically to either side, the vases act as visual counterweights to the voluptuous mass of the fruit, establishing the poised equilibrium that is a signature of Tomás Hiepes - see for example his 1642 *Delft Fruit Bowl and two Vases of Flowers* (Fig. 1). An identical basket can be found in other of his compositions, as in the 1642-1645 *Still life of pomegranates* recently sold at Sotheby's London (Fig. 2)

Although exhibited with its pendant in 1935 and again in 1983-84 under the name of Juan Bautista de Espinosa¹ subsequent scholarship has reached a concordant attribution to Tomás Hiepes. Other than the balanced compositional scheme, the specific handling of surfaces is particularly indicative of the Valencian painter's mature practice, from the compact, bead-like highlights on the grapes to the crisply incised wickerwork and the delicate modelling of petals and glass. One can't help but notice the artist's characteristic insistence on tactile description achieved through layering and small, opaque highlights.

Seen as a whole, the painting is imbued with a meditative sense of stillness, consonant with the moralising inflections of Spanish bodegón painting, in which the contemplation of humble things could intimate order, temperance and the fecundity of nature, following in the precepts of the Counterreformation. Simultaneously, the essential nature of the composition endows it with a somewhat modern feel.

BIO:

Tomás Hiepes (or Yepes) pursued his career in Valencia, where he enjoyed considerable reputation.² He is documented in the Colegio de Pintores of that city in 1616 and, by 1630, as married to Ana Heres (or Eres). His early still lifes betray knowledge of Castilian models - above all Juan van der Hamen and Alejandro de Loarte - in their ordered set-pieces and cool, enamel-like finish; yet Hiepes's idiom is more austere and frontal, with a marked preference for symmetrical construction and for objects native to Valencian taste and commerce. Archival discoveries in recent decades have clarified his professional ties to bankers and merchants frequenting the

¹ See *Floreros y bodegones en la pintura española*, Palacio de la Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, 1935, p. 154, no. 28; *Pintura española de bodegones y floreros de 1600 a Goya*, Museo del Prado/Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, 1983-84, p. 58, no. 31.

² See W.B. Jordan and P. Cherry, *Spanish Still Life: from Velázquez to Goya*, exh. cat., London 1995, p. 118.

COLNAGHI

Medina del Campo fair, an economic network that plausibly mediated the circulation of luxury foodstuffs, glassware and decorative baskets such as those depicted here.

While Hiepes also produced religious works - most notably a *Virgen de los Desamparados* (1644) in the convent of the Descalzas Reales, Madrid - his enduring distinction lies in still life and flower painting, genres in which he achieved an uncommon balance of sobriety and splendour. Writing in 1656, the local chronicler Marco Antonio Orti described Hiepes as “the painter who in this line of the imitation of fruits has succeeded in acquiring a very singular fame and reputation”.³ Similarly, in his *Vida de los pintores, arquitectos, escultores y grabadores valencianos*, Marcos Antonio de Orellana (1731–1813) wrote: “His flowers are subtle, translucent and light, his fruits very natural and everything done with admirable perfection. His paintings are equally copious as they are esteemed and celebrated, and one does not see baskets with fruit, flowers... and other similar things which are well executed in conformity with the real things, without thinking and esteeming them to be works by Yepes”.⁴

³ M.A. Orti, *Libro de Fiestas por la Canonización de Santo Thomás de Villanueva*, Valencia 1656, p. 168.

⁴ M.A. de Orellana, *Biografía pictórica valentina o Vida de los pintores, arquitectos, escultores y grabadores valencianos*, X. de Salas (ed.), 2nd ed., Valencia 1967, pp. 221–22.

COLNAGHI



Fig. 1. Tomás Hiepes, *Delft Fruit Bowl and two Vases of Flowers*, 1642, oil on canvas, 67 x 96 cm. Madrid, Museo del Prado.



Fig. 2. Tomás Hiepes, *Still life of pomegranates in a basket, a bread roll and a pastry on a ledge*, 1642-1645, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 90.1 cm. Private collection.

COLNAGHI

COLNAGHI *London*

26 BURY STREET, LONDON SW1Y 6AL
UNITED KINGDOM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
10AM-6PM

+44 (0)20 7491 7408

contact@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI *Madrid*

CALLE GENERAL CASTAÑOS 9
PLANTA BAJA, DCHA.
28004 MADRID

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
BY APPOINTMENT

spain@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI *New York*

23 EAST 67TH STREET, FOURTH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10065
USA

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
10AM-6PM

+1 (917) 388-3825

newyork@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI *Brussels*

RUE JACQUES JORDAENS 30
1000 BRUXELLES
BELGIUM

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

brussels@colnaghi.com