

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



PIETER NASON

(Amsterdam *circa* 1612 -*circa* 1688/90 The Hague)

PORTRAIT OF REINIER PAUW, THREE-QUARTER LENGTH, WEARING ARMOUR, HOLDING A PISTOL

oil on canvas

86.4 x 67.9 cm; 34 x 26.3/4 in.

signed upper left: 1667 / PNason f [PN in ligature] and inscribed lower left: R Pauú.

inscribed on the reverse AETATIS.25 1667

Provenance

Sale, Rudolph Lepke's Kunst-Auctions-Haus, Berlin, 23 February 1909, lot 112 (reproduced in the catalogue, titled *Portrait of a prince of Nassau-Orange*);

The Estate of Peter H. Tillou, Litchfield, Connecticut;

His sale, Brunk Auctions (Asheville, North Carolina), 29 September 2022, lot 128.

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Pieter Nason was one of the leading portrait painters in The Hague for several decades. The present work, signed and dated 1667, showcases one of the artist's most sophisticated and highest quality creations. It depicts a gentleman, in the prime of his life, adorned in shining armour, with long, wavy hair and a finely trimmed moustache. His attire, complete with a lace cravat with a resplendent red bow, and a coral twisted sash with gold fringes tied around his waist, places him squarely in the fashion forefront of his time. Set against an outdoor backdrop, this dashing sitter proudly stands with a flintlock pistol against his hip and a sword sheath just visible in the lower right corner.

Pieter Nason was born in Amsterdam, the son of Herbert Nason, a butcher, and his wife who likely fled from Antwerp as religious refugees. Though the specifics of his initial artistic instruction remain elusive, Nason probably trained with Nicolaes Eliasz. Pickenoy (1588-1650/56) and Jan van Ravesteyn (c.1572-1657), distinguished Amsterdam portraitists. In *circa* 1638-39 he relocated to The Hague and married Maria van Manezee. There, he became a founding member of the Confrerie Pictura, which eventually replaced The Hague's painters' guild, evidence of his prominent position within the city's artistic community.

The subject of this magnificent portrait is Reinier Pauw (c.1642-1693), identified through the inscription in the lower left corner of the painting. Baptised in The Hague on 26 October 1642, Pauw was about 25 years old at the time of this portrait. He was the eldest son of Diedrick Pauw (1618-1688), an upper-class Dutch gentleman and one of The Hague's wealthiest individuals.¹ Reinier, alongside his brother Joan, pursued a military career, supporting Prince William III of Orange – both appear to have been favourites of the Prince, who later became King of England. In 1676, Reinier Pauw inherited a large house on Korte Vijverberg (now no. 3), a major location in The Hague, which had been built in 1635 for his grandfather, also named Reinier Pauw. Reinier's father held the hereditary title of Lord of Ter Horst and, through his marriage with Elizabeth Cats, also became Lord of Carnisse; upon his death in 1688, he passed these titles to his son. Reinier died a bachelor and without issue on 7 July 1693.

Nason's style shows the influence of both Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) and Gerrit van Honthorst (1590-1656). Like his contemporary Adriaen Hanneman (1603/4-1671), Nason was sought after by the visiting English court in exile, making at least one portrait of Charles II which was engraved several times in the 1660s; and two portraits of royalist courtiers (figs 1-2). He also travelled to England, likely in 1663, and Cleves, in 1666, for commissions. Among his sitters were several members of the House of Orange and other notable figures within The Hague's court circles, such as the present sitter. Nason's successful career extended well into the late 1680s.

¹ In 1674 Diedrick was the richest man in The Hague (Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek, vol. 9, column 764)

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This painting not only epitomises the pinnacle of Pieter Nason's career, but also serves as an important historical document, vividly capturing the fashion, power, and societal structure of its era. In his skilful rendering of Reinier Pauw and his opulent garments and military accoutrements, Nason showcases the sitter's high status as well as cementing his own legacy as a master portraitist, immortalising both the artist and the sitter within the annals of Dutch history.

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Fig. 1. Pieter Nason, *Oliver St John*, oil on canvas, 220 x 156.8cm, London, National Portrait Gallery.

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Fig. 2. Pieter Nason, *Walter Strickland*, oil on canvas, 213.7 x 151.5cm, London, National Portrait Gallery.

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