

T O M A S S O



Hans von Aachen (1552 – 1615)

Portrait of Adriaen de Vries, wearing a white ruff and a black doublet, half length

Oil on canvas 50.3 x 40.4 cm

Hans von Aachen was trained in the Netherlandish fashion and became a member of the Guild of Painters, in Cologne at an early age. Around 1574 he began travelling across Europe, starting in Venice and moving to Rome in 1575. By 1582 he was based in Florence where he lived with the famous Flemish sculptor Giambologna, this influential friendship led to him obtaining commissions for portraits of grandiose sitters, including members of the Medici family.

After this time he moved further north, we know that he was in Augsburg by 1587, and had moved onto Munich by 1589. He settled permanently in Prague in 1594, where he secured the patronage of Rudolph II. Von Aachen was so highly regarded by the Emperor that he was occasionally entrusted to perform diplomatic services on the court's behalf.

Von Aachen's achievements as a renowned portraitist were equally matched by his enchanting depictions of mythological scenes showing a versatility and skill, which was barely matched by his contemporaries.

This portrait of Adriaen de Vries was almost certainly painted in Prague Circa 1595, when both artists were working for the Royal Court and were each at the pinnacles of their careers. De Vries, a Dutchman by birth, had been brought to Prague by Rudolph who was intent on making the city the cultural centre of Europe, attempting to overthrow the positions held by Florence and Rome, interestingly two cities which had had a profound effect on both painter and sitter. Forgotten by the past centuries, Adriaen de Vries is now rightly understood and appreciated as one of the most

innovative and interesting sculptors to have ever lived.

The intimacy of the sitters gaze and overall warm tonality to this portrait indicate that these two artists were more than colleagues working in the same circles, and that they shared a respectful friendship.

Provenance:

Private Collection, Switzerland

Exhibitions

Rudolfine Beauty, National Gallery, Prague 10 April 2007 – 20 February 2009.

The Entry of the Arts into Bohemia. Liechtenstein Museum 20 November 2009 - 12 January 2010.

Hans von Aachen, Suermondt - Ludwig- Museum Aachen 11 March - 13 June 2010, Prague National Gallery 1 July - 3 October 2010 & Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 19 October - 9 January 2011.

Literature:

J. Jacoby, Hans von Aachen, 1552- 1615, published Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2000, p.256 -257 ill. p.258