

RICHARD GREEN

JAN FRANS VAN DAEL
Antwerp 1764 - 1840 Paris

Ref: CD 190

Roses in a glass vase



Signed with initials lower right: *VD.*

Oil on canvas: 12 ³/₄ x 9 ⁷/₈ in / 32.4 x 25.1 cm

Painted *circa* 1830

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Provenance:

Private collection, France, 1931-2001;
Mes Blanchet et Joron-Derem, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 1st March 2001, lot 10;
private collection, France

Jan Frans van Dael was one of the most highly regarded painters of still lifes of flowers and fruit in Paris during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He moved to Paris from his city of birth, Antwerp, at the age of twenty-two, after having studied architecture at the Antwerp Academy. In the French capital he established himself as an artist and soon received important commissions for decorative paintings, including for the châteaux of Saint Cloud, Bellevue and Chantilly. During the 1790s he established himself as a painter of still lifes of flowers and fruit, supported and encouraged by the leading painter of this genre of the time, Gerard van Spaendonck (1746-1822). In 1793 van Dael was awarded a studio in the Louvre. He exhibited at the annual Paris Salons and received medals and distinctions in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. He also presided over a studio at the Sorbonne University¹, where he trained several pupils, including Christiaan van Pol, Elise Bruyère and Adèle Riché. After his death in March 1840, van Dael was buried at Père Lachaise cemetery, next to van Spaendonck. His success is reflected in the prestige of his patrons, who included both of Napoleon's Empresses, Joséphine and Marie-Louise, and the French Kings Louis XVIII and Charles X.

This painting is an exquisite example of van Dael's smaller works, with a restricted number of flowers placed in a simple glass vase on a marble ledge. Roses were an especial favourite. Here, van Dael focusses on two large, pale pink Centifolia or Provence roses, a type of unknown origin introduced into Europe before 1600. He revels in their globular, heavy heads and the infinite complexity of their petals. Tight buds behind the main blooms are a rich salmon-pink. Van Dael gives sculptural solidity and movement to the composition by placing the right-hand side of the bouquet in shadow and describing the play of light over the richly-veined leaves.

Van Dael's flowerpiece reflects the tradition of his Flemish and Dutch forebears, such as Jan van Huysum (1682-1749), in its refinement and evocation of textures. Drops of water glisten on a lower leaf. The complex reflections in the ribbed glass vase are brilliantly evoked. The choice of pastel flowers and the linear delicacy of van Dael's painting is however characteristic of aristocratic French taste in the early nineteenth century, as is the enthusiasm for roses. Rose breeding developed greatly in that era, encouraged by the Empress Joséphine's (1763-1814) garden at Malmaison near Paris, filled with more than 250 varieties. These were painted by her official artist Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759-1840), like van Dael a pupil of Spaendonck, and widely disseminated in his engravings to *Les roses* (1817-24).

Like most flower painters, van Dael produced his compositions with reference to drawn or watercolour life studies kept in the studio. The pair of roses in this work turns up with variants in several other paintings, including *A still life of roses in a round glass vase* (private collection), sold at

¹ See Philippe Jacques van Brée's *Interior of the studio of van Dael and his students at the Sorbonne*, 1816, a study for the painting exhibited at the Salon in 1817. It is interesting that all the students in this painting are female. Flower painting was one of the few genres in which women were allowed to excel. With Galerie Talabardon & Gautier, Paris, 2016; RKD Images no.1001218962.

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Sotheby's New York on 22nd January 2004, lot 105². Van Dael in turn inspired later flower painters, for example in the paired roses at the bottom of *Roses in a vase*, 1845, by Antoine Chazal (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).



Philippe Jacques van Brée, *Interior of the studio of van Dael and his students at the Sorbonne*, 1816.

The work of Jan Frans van Dael is represented in the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; the Louvre, Paris; the Hermitage, St Petersburg and the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia.

² Oil on panel: 18 ¼ x 14 ½ in / 46.5 x 37 cm.

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