

# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

## Albany Institute of History & Art

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## NEWS

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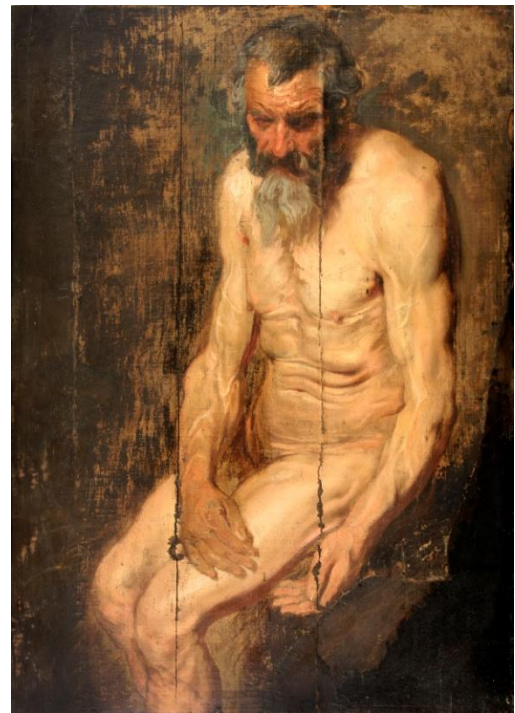
### **‘AN ORPHAN NO MORE’: RECENTLY DISCOVERED OIL SKETCH BY ANTHONY VAN DYCK ON DISPLAY IN ALBANY, NEW YORK**

ALBANY, NEW YORK —The Albany Institute of History & Art in Albany, New York will host a limited viewing of a recently discovered oil sketch by Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641). The sketch, owned by Hudson Valley collector Albert B. Roberts, is sure to make waves in the international art world. The sketch will be on view to the public in the museum’s Christine & George R. Hearst III Gallery from Wednesday, September 18, 2019—Sunday, October 6, 2019. The special viewing will be included with museum admission.

“It is rare, indeed, for a work by a major master to come to light. The oil sketch that Mr. Roberts discovered by Anthony Van Dyck is an impressive and important find that helps us understand more about the artist’s method as a young man,” says Rev. Dr. Susan J. Barnes, Van Dyck scholar and co-author of *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings*.

Long-time Hudson Valley collector and friend of the Albany Institute of History & Art, **Albert B. Roberts** has devoted the past thirty years of his life to the search for art that he likes to call ‘orphaned’; art that for one reason or another has been neglected, overlooked, lost in the shuffle of the art world in different countries, or perhaps a painter was absent-minded and allowed work to slip through the cracks.

After years of investigation, scholars have confirmed the artist and identified the painting for this oil sketch. Roberts reflects, “I suppose it’s not every day that a painting picked up for \$600 with bird droppings on the back turns out to be a masterpiece of European Art.”



Study for Saint Jerome with an Angel, Anthony van Dyck, c. 1618-20, oil on canvas, mounted to board, collection of Albert B. Roberts

In his search for orphaned art, Roberts has developed a method for examining works of art to determine attribution, a method he calls “sophisticated, rigorous, if highly unorthodox.” He has just written a book describing his method, which reflects on numerous examples of the ‘orphaned art’ he has identified. In the case of this oil sketch, Roberts quickly determined that the artist was likely Dutch or Flemish from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He started researching Van Dyck and focused on the Van Dyck’s early Italian period. He recognized a model that resembled- muscle for muscle- the figure in Van Dyck’s painting of Saint Jerome.

“But then, looking at my records,” Roberts says, “I did nothing about it then. I essentially had the answer, and it’s typical. What’s exciting for me is the chase. And once I’m satisfied who it’s by, I turn to other work.” But when Roberts read an international art blog by Bendor Grosvenor, who was particularly interested in Van Dyck’s early models, he took a chance and contacted him. Although the photographs were poor quality, Grosvenor was interested and asked to see higher-quality images. “I’m embarrassed to tell you that seven years later I followed up and had that painting and several others professionally photographed. And I sent him the photographs. He wrote back immediately, asking if I wished to have the painting looked at by an academic.”

Scholar Rev. Dr. Susan J. Barnes worked with Roberts to authenticate the sketch: “Though the artist was about eighteen years old when he painted it (400 years ago), he was a precocious talent and already a master. The Roberts full-color and large-scale oil on canvas depicts an elderly man. It’s a study for Van Dyck’s finished painting of St. Jerome in the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam. Van Dyck painted his sketch from a living model, carefully rendering his furrowed, sun-weathered brow and time-worn body. His goal was to convey the sense of the saint as a real person— one with whom faithful viewers could identify and whom they could aspire to emulate.”



Saint Jerome, Anthony van Dyck, c. 1618-20, oil on canvas, collection of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Albany Institute of History & Art Executive Director Tammis K. Groft welcomes the opportunity to showcase this discovery and work with Roberts to arrange this special viewing. Groft first met Roberts in the late 1970s when she was a young curator at the Albany Institute and he was a member of the museum’s Collections Committee. Over the years, they have fondly discussed art. “Al has a keen eye, photographic memory, and a passion for research,” says Groft. “He is also a very patient man. In some cases, he conducts his research on what he describes as his ‘orphaned art’ for decades.”

“Here at the museum, we are fortunate that AI has donated almost fifty paintings, sculptures, prints, textiles, furniture, ceramics, architectural details, and photographs, all with strong ties to the history of the upper Hudson Valley and with great stories to engage museum visitors of all ages,” Groft continues. “This story is pretty exciting and we are thrilled to host the opportunity to display this remarkable find.”

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**More about Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641):** Flemish artist Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) was one of the most important and influential painters of 17th century Baroque tradition. Together with his teacher

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), he helped develop the great Flemish Baroque style of the southern Netherlands (modern-day Belgium and Luxembourg).

The Flemish Baroque embraced Counter Reformation ideology and was part of the very influential Baroque cultural movement. This part of the Low Countries was wealthy, largely run by a successful merchant class, and predominantly Roman Catholic. The Baroque, and its Flemish contingent, stressed a kind of forceful humanist art produced during the High Renaissance, as well as religious iconography—which had been in decline in parts of Europe since the Reformation of the 16th century.

Anthony van Dyck was an artistic prodigy, and his early work under the tutelage of Rubens, exhibit the qualities of movement, color and sensuality embraced by his master. Like his master, van Dyck also spent time studying the art of the Renaissance in Italy. In 1632, after success in the southern Netherlands and Italy, van Dyck would become the leading court painter in England, under Charles I (1600-1649). Charles knighted him in July of that year providing him with a house on the Thames along with a generous stipend. The style of portraiture van Dyck developed while in London was graceful yet imposing, and was influential well beyond England.

In his religious and portrait paintings, Van Dyck pioneered means of personal piety and intimacy. In his history paintings he developed a style that owed much to Titian, yet foreshadowed the Rococo painters of the 18th century.

The rare oil sketch dates from Van Dyck's First Antwerp period.

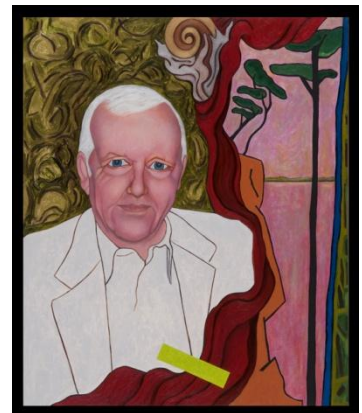
**More about Albert B. Roberts:** Albert B. Roberts grew up in Endwell, New York where he began developing a lifelong passion for art. He graduated from SUNY Binghamton (Harpur College) and attended Cornell as a Telluride Scholar in Law and Public Administration.

In 1958, he joined The Rockefeller Administration where he worked on the expansion of New York's State University System. He served as Director of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee and later, as Director of the Senate Committee on Taxation. In 1983, Roberts was instrumental in bringing attention to the burgeoning AIDS epidemic and to the establishment of the New York State AIDS Institute within the NY State

Department of Health. Additionally, he was at the forefront of the development of the New York State Kidney Disease Institute, also within the NY State Dept. of Health.

Roberts has amassed an impressive collection of paintings and sculptures over the years. As a collector turned author, he has written a new book on his method of finding and authenticating orphaned art.

Roberts is a long-time friend and donor to the Albany Institute of History & Art. He served on the museum Board of Trustees during the 1970s and Collections Committee during the 1980s. Roberts has donated over 40 works of art, decorative arts, and historical materials related to the art, history, and culture of the Hudson Valley. He has also sponsored the presentation of exhibitions of Bill Sullivan and Stephanie Rose.



Portrait of Albert B. Roberts  
Stephanie Rose  
2004-2007  
Oil on canvas, 36 x 30  
Collection of Albert B. Roberts

**More about the Albany Institute of History & Art:** The Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Located in downtown Albany just one block from the New York State Capitol, the museum welcomes over 30,000 visitors each year to explore exhibitions ranging from colonial history to contemporary art. The Institute's museum and library holdings form the best collections in the United States documenting the life and culture of the Upper Hudson Valley region from the late seventeenth century to the present day. Although the museum is famous for its significant Hudson River School paintings, the broad scope of its collections includes fine arts, furnishings, personal objects, documents, manuscripts, photographs, and personal papers used by people of all ages, social classes, economic conditions, and cultural groups. Each year, the Albany Institute serves thousands of students with their education programs, hosts numerous lectures and community events, welcomes researchers into the library, leads art making in the studio, and curates special exhibitions. The museum's gift shop stocks items that reflect pieces from the museum's collection or are made by local artists and craftspeople. The museum café offers visitors and downtown patrons breakfast and lunch items, coffees and teas, as well as desserts and snacks.

For more information, please visit [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org) and be sure to follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute](https://www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute)), Twitter (@AlbanyInstitute), and Instagram (AlbanyInstitute).