

RALPH GIERHARDS

ANTIQUES / FINE ART



Young woman at her window, holding a cage with a parrot

Painting, Antwerp, Parrot,

46 cm
1' 6 1/4"

17th Century

Parquet oak panel

Signed

Laureys Goubeau (Antwerp 1640 - 1670)

Still life or portrait? This scene by the painter Laureys Goubeau (1640-1670) seems to blend and harmoniously combine the genres of painting. Behind a stone ledge covered with a red cloth, upon which a silver fruit bowl and a birdcage are draped, sits a young lady in fine clothing. She appears to be looking directly at the viewer and simultaneously presents a parrot on her right hand. Next to another window in the background, a group of people sit at a table, deep in conversation.

The parrot in the young woman's hand is by no means arbitrary. The bird's ability to speak gave exotic birds the reputation of being excellent learners. Thus, in his work *Sinne-en minnebeelden* from 1627, Jacob Cats gave an emblem with a parrot the subtitle "Dwanck, leert snack" ("Discipline teaches eloquence"). Furthermore, the symbolism of birds and birdcages has amorous connotations, with the bird freed from the cage potentially alluding to the woman's lost innocence.