



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art



Walter Launt Palmer (1854-1932)

Van Antwerp Interior (Grandpa's Insides)

Oil on canvas

22 ¾ x 25 ¼ inches

Signed and dated 1882, lower right

Collection of Martha Van Antwerp Powell

Walter Launt Palmer was born in Albany, New York in 1854. The son of sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer, the artist was raised among artists. His family home was often visited by notable artists including Frederic E. Church, John F. Kensett, and Jervis McEntee. Encouraged by his father, Palmer spent his youth sketching scenery near Albany and along the banks of the Hudson River. In 1870, at 16 years of age, Palmer began studying under the tutelage of Frederic E. Church.¹

In 1873, Palmer made his first trip abroad with his family. In Italy, he met John Singer Sargent and visited the studios of George Inness, Elihu Vedder, among others. In 1874, he studied at the studio of Carolus Duran in Paris. He returned to Paris for further study with Duran from 1876 to 1877. Back in New York, the artist completed two interiors of the dining room at Appledale, the Palmer family summer home. Lauded by the public, Palmer's interiors brought the artist a succession of commissions between 1877 and 1902.²

The artist's *Van Antwerp Interior (Grandpa's Insides)* captures the richly layered décor of a 19th century interior. The dimly lit foreground is softly illuminated by natural light from a window outside of the picture plane. The room is outfitted with a lavish oriental rug, and the patterned walls are hung with paintings in ornate gilt frames. Elements of Victorian *chinoiserie* can be

¹ Maybelle Mann, *Walter Launt Palmer: Poetic Reality* (Exton, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1984) 11-26.

² Maybelle Mann, 11-26.



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found in the pink vase on the right and the small ornamental cabinet it rests upon. In the next room, a fire burns softly in the marble fireplace on the left while a brightly lit window framed in heavy drapery reveals a Dutch influence.

The Van Antwerp family are descendants of Daniel Janse Van Antwerpen, a Dutch trader, and one of the earliest inhabitants of the United States. Around 1656, as a young man, of approximately 21 years of age, he arrived in America.³ By 1670, he had settled near Schenectady. In the years following his arrival in Schenectady, Van Antwerpen became one of five justices in the village.⁴

While celebrated for his winter snow scenes with their delicate color variations, Palmer's highly detailed interiors remain as fascinating today as they were to viewers in the 19th century. Palmer's *Van Antwerp Interior (Grandpa's Insides)* provides a unique glimpse, like a time capsule, into the living quarters of a prominent 19th century family. The work also represents a historical emblem of New York's Dutch roots.

³ Lee Douglas Van Antwerp, "The Family Van Antwerp in America," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, Number 2, Volume 79 (New York: The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1941) 18-23.

⁴ John J. Vrooman, *Forts and Firesides of the Mohawk Country, New York* (Johnstown, New York: Baronet Litho Co., Inc., 1951) 119.