

Hubert Vos (Dutch, 1855–1935)

Study of Hawaiian Fish, 1898

Oil on canvas

Gift of Robert and Deanna Levy, 1987 (5626.1)

No doubt in reference to this depiction of a white-bearded Hawaiian fisherman spilling the bounty of the sea from his woven lauhala basket onto a table top, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* informed its readers on April 26, 1898, that:

Hubert Vos is just now engaged in a large painting of Hawaiian Fishes represented in various positions on a marble slab. He has been particularly struck by the exquisite coloring of the members of the finny tribe to be found in Hawaiian waters.

In painting this carefully detailed representation of fifty-seven varieties of the fish and crustaceans that inhabit Hawaiian waters, Hubert Vos drew on the tradition of 17th-centuryseventeenth-century Dutch still--life painting, with which he must haveas doubtless been familiar from his childhood and studies in Europe. To create the composition, he sketched actual specimens of sea life that he purchased at the Honolulu fish market, giving careful attention to their richness of color and form. The myriad forms and colors are not fanciful imaginings but were carefully rendered from sketches of actual specimens purchased at the Honolulu fish market. An 'umeke of kou wood, a draped net, and a woven lauhala basket locate this scene in pre-contact Hawai'i. Vos completed this impressive work by including a kou calabash and a draped net in the background.

HUBERT VOS
Holland, 1855–1935

***Study of Hawaiian Fish*, 1898**
Oil on canvas

Gift of Robert and Deanna Levy, 1987
(5626.1)

No doubt in reference to this depiction of a white-bearded Hawaiian fisherman spilling the bounty of the sea from his woven *lauhala* basket onto a table top, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* informed its readers on April 26, 1898, that:

Hubert Vos is just now engaged in a large painting of Hawaiian Fishes represented in various positions on a marble slab. He has been particularly struck by the exquisite coloring of the members of the finny tribe to be found in Hawaiian waters.

In painting this carefully detailed representation of fifty-seven varieties of fish and crustaceans Vos drew on the tradition of seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painting with which he must have been familiar from his childhood and studies in Europe. The myriad forms and colors are not fanciful imaginings but were carefully rendered from sketches of actual specimens purchased at the Honolulu fish market. Vos completed this impressive work by including a *kou* calabash and a draped net in the background.

*see Encounters with Paradise
p. 222*