David Bailly, Self-Portrait with an Allegorical Still Life, (cat. 38, detail).
This understanding of still life, based on the decoration of ancient Roman grottos, is remarkably similar to our own. Indeed, van Hoogstraten’s ranking of specific subjects—beginning with flowers and proceeding to fruit and laid tables, while leaving for last such unpleasant items as fish, slaughtered meat, and dead game—would probably be shared by most modern collectors and museum-goers. Significantly, van Hoogstraten’s text includes depictions of kitchens and markets like those by Pieter Aertsen, Jozef Buevaert, and Frans Snyders. Simply put, a still life is a painted arrangement of inanimate objects, arranged in a single group, but the category shares many features with nature studies, animal paintings, and illusionistic pictures, it possesses its own distinctive characteristics. Still life should also be considered practically a branch of oil painting, at least in the Netherland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, since drawings and prints served very different functions from the artfully composed and carefully lit worlds of still-life paintings.

The terms used to describe and classify still lifes in the seventeenth century can serve as a basis for elucidating attitudes toward the genre. Where modern categories do not conform to historical usage, these divergences need to be clearly understood and perhaps rethought, especially since certain categories that are commonly cited, including ‘monochromie banquette’ (monochromatic banquet), ‘tabakbier’ (tobacco piece), ‘prunk’ (opulent) still life, and ‘bedrijvenje’ (deception), have little or no foundation in historical usage.

**Terms**

Karel van Mander, in his Schilder-boeck of 1604, does not employ the term ‘still life’ or any comparable generic phrase, although he praises the ability of painters such as Aertsen and Jacques de Gheyn to depict objects. Van Mander lists the principal genres of painting, beginning with the histories and figure scenes, which he regarded as the supreme achievement of an artist (see the essay by Guido Jansen), before proceeding to group together ‘animals, kitchens, fruit, flowers’ which seems to represent an early understanding of what might constitute still life.

Early seventeenth-century inventories similarly described paintings by the kind of object represented, with the addition of the word ‘banquet,’ which seems to have been applied to food placed on a table.

Around 1630, Constantijn Huygens, scholar and secretary to the prince of Orange, provided the first clear enunciation of a broad category of still life when he described de Gheyn and Johannes Torrens as painters of inanimate objects, employing the Latin term ‘inanimatus.’ Huygens judges that de Gheyn, ‘in inanimate things, such as books and papers and other like objects used by people, he surpassed everyone.’ De Gheyn’s still life of 1621 certainly demonstrates these abilities (fig. 8). In the same passage, Huygens also discusses de Gheyn’s paintings of flowers, thus linking flower paintings with depictions of everyday objects. Huygens repeats the Latin ‘inanimatus’ in characterizing the paintings of Torrens and, de Gheyn’s great rival: ‘in my opinion, in the rendering of inanimate objects there is an accuracy of appearance, and moreover, there is no one who could accomplish so well things of glass, tin, pottery, and iron.’ These are important indications that paintings of inanimate things were already considered a separate genre even in the absence of a generally accepted terminology.

In 1649, David Bailly (see cat. 38 and fig. on p. 10) was called a very good painter ‘en vie cove’ (or ‘la vie coine’), which means quiet or immobile life (fig. 38a in catalogue). This is an almost literal translation of the Dutch word ‘stilleven’ (still life), which is very possible as the caption was written in Antwerp, and the usage is otherwise unknown in French. This usage actually precedes by a year the documented occurrence of ‘stilleven,’ which appears in a Delft inventory of 1650 to describe a painting by Evert van Aelst, the uncle and teacher of Willem van Aelst. Evert van Aelst’s few surviving paintings depict tables with fruit, glasses, and flowers (fig. 1). There is a gap of seven years before the term is next documented: In 1657, the inventory of the Amsterdam dealer Johannes de Renialme lists a ‘still life by Jan Lievens’ valued at 150 guilders, as well as several other still lifes by Pieter van der Asch and François Rijckhals. After that date,
the term is frequently encountered in Holland, where by 1670 it seems to have replaced the general descriptive categories 'bancker' and 'ontbijt.' Van Hoogstraten employs 'stilleven' often in his 1678 treatise, although it is rarely encountered in the southern Netherlands.

Other texts provide further clarification. For example, Rembrandt's collection contained 'een still legget leven van Rembrand genetukeert' (a still-lying life by Rembrandt retouched), while the 1658 accounts of the Antwerp dealer Mattijs Musson record a painting of 'stilstaande dinghen' (still-standing things). This phrase, together with a few similar passages from Cornelis de Bie's book of 1662, make up the few occurrences of the term in Antwerp. Joachim von Sandrart, writing in German in 1675, used analogous constructions such as 'stillsstehenden natürlichem Sachen' (still-standing natural objects) and 'stillegenden Sachen' (still-lying things). The English 'still life' was first used by William Aglionby in 1685, also to denote inanimate materials. Huygens's use of the word 'inanimatis' (inanimate objects) in 1663 already closely anticipated the meaning of 'still life' as a depiction of immobile, nonliving objects.

In 1707, Gerard de Lairesse attempted an overall definition of still life:

We shall now, to help weak spirits, proceed to still life... Indeed, first of all we should clarify the word still life, which can be said to be motionless or inanimate things, such as flowers, fruit, gold, silver, wood, stone, musical instruments, dead fish, etc., all of which can, in different manners, each in its own way, serve as principal subjects, to be naturally composed on canvas or wood. With these above-mentioned objects one can find sufficient means to please all kinds of people and sensibilities, the high as well as low, the learned as well as the simple. We shall therefore choose out of many objects those we judge the most beautiful, elegant, and pleasing. First, flowers. Second, fruit. Third, gold, silver, and other precious treasures. Fourth, musical instruments. These four types, appropriate to art and well executed, can without problem be placed in salons and cabinets, just like the best paintings, provided they receive proper light and remain together with each other. 14
Couched in grudging praise for the genre, the constituent categories of still-life painting are clearly laid out, although later de Lairesse also admits to another class of still life that he finds unpleasant: vegetables and fish. Those who desire them may go to the market. It is somewhat surprising to find that musical instruments make up a separate category, for while lutes, violins, and flutes can sometimes be seen in seventeenth-century still lifes (fig. 1), the form was not especially common and is rarely described in inventories. Overall, de Lairesse's ranking of still-life subjects echoes van Hoogstraten's judgment, while the broad definition of still life is confirmed by its use in Dutch inventories of the second half of the seventeenth century when objects of all sorts came to be classified as still life.

**Moral Messages: Vanitas**

Various other terms are used to describe still lifes in the seventeenth century, and there are important shifts in usage over time as well as important differences between the northern and southern Netherlands (see Appendix). One of the most intriguing terms, since it seems to suggest a specific meaning rather than merely certain kinds of objects, is 'vanitas.' The word occurs frequently in inventories in Holland but, surprisingly, mainly after 1650, when production of obviously symbolic still lifes had declined sharply. The name 'vanitas' is rarely applied to paintings in Antwerp, although Flemish still lifes were as likely to contain symbols of transience. Inventories attribute vanitas paintings to Aertsen, Pieter Claesz (the most common artist), Jan Davidsz de Heem, Simon Luttichuys, Jan Lievens, Coenelis Britse, Abraham van Beyeren, and even Rembrandt; whose own bankruptcy inventory lists four vanitas paintings by him. Many of these artists painted skulls and other symbols of transience, suggesting that vanitas pictures contained these motifs.

However, it is very likely that the term became a generic description for a wide range of still lifes. De Lairesse wrote:

> There is yet another type of Still life, which is not the least trifling, and with the preceding can yield a no less elegant variety. It consists of all kinds of precious things, such as gold, silver, crystal and other glasses, pearls, gemstones, and mother-of-pearl, commonly called Vanitas. The famous Kalf, who left many excellent and outstanding examples, excelled in this and above all earned the highest praise.

In failing to assign any meaning to vanitas still lifes, de Lairesse's conception of the form differs from many modern interpretations, which regard many still lifes as symbolizing the emptiness of worldly existence. In moralizing emblems and prints, objects such as skulls, hourglasses, and bubbles signal the passing of time. Viewers of the seventeenth century may have similarly understood some of the objects in still lifes, especially when paintings were inscribed with clear texts. However such texts are lacking in most still lifes, while symbolic meanings have been adduced in all manner of objects. It is difficult to believe that most, if not nearly all, Netherlandish still lifes contain vanitas messages, as has been suggested. While some seventeenth-century observers would have brought a moralizing interpretation to all images, it is doubtful that this was the primary response to most still lifes. Moreover, the objects represented in still lifes possess a rich array of associations and references, and the surviving seventeenth-century texts that treat still lifes interpret them in entirely different ways.

**Skulls**

Skulls, which often appear in still lifes of the early seventeenth century, were so obviously connected with death that their meaning can no longer be regarded as symbolic, there being no indirect or 'hidden' connection. A skull simply is death. Representations of Saint Jerome often contain a skull, which reinforced religious meanings, and in many still lifes a skull can be seen with pens, books, papers, and candles (cats. 15, 16). Modern viewers are sometimes alarmed by the presence of a skull in a painting, but we should remember that skulls and skeletons could be seen, and were actually collected by connoisseurs interested in naturalia and science. Not only did the Amsterdam surgeon's guild collect anatomical specimens, it also possessed a

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**fig. 1** Hercules Segers, Skull, canvas, 20.2 x 26 cm. Private collection, USA.
painting of a skull by Hercules Segers, which very likely survives in a remarkably detailed and evocatively shadowed picture (fig. 3). The direct realism of this painting underscores any symbolic reading, especially given the context in which it was seen. Moreover, carvings of skulls in ivory, boxwood, and other materials became popular in Germany and the Netherlands (fig. 4) and there are clear signs that a skull could be an accoutrement of a scholar or intellectual. Skulls for example appear in depictions of collector’s cabinets by Claesz, Gerrit Dou, Georg Hinz, and others. Skulls, skeletons, and human bones could also be encountered in an artist’s studio, as Jan Vos indicates in his poem ‘Struggle between Death and Nature, or Victory of Painting’ (Strijd tuschen de doode en naauw, of Zege der schilderkunst) of 1654. The symbolic value of such skulls is therefore complex since they were collected and studied for a variety of reasons, whether for scientific and anatomical study, as a collector’s item representing the wonder of nature, or as a simple reminder of death and the frailty of human endeavor.

It is important to distinguish between reminders of death with the vanitas concept of the emptiness of worldly existence. Pieter Stenwijk’s still life of 1653 (fig. 3) cannot simply be considered a vanitas painting, despite the presence of a skull, because the image specifically celebrates the life of Admiral Maerten Tromp, who had recently died at the Battle of Ter Heijde. At the lower
enduring permanence that outlasts death. In 1652, for example, Amalia van Solms presented the painter Daniel Seghers with a golden mulstick engraved with a skull. Rather than a vanitas symbol, the skull demonstrated that Seghers’s fame as well as his paintings of flowers will conquer death. Seghers wrote that the skull is a sign that art continues to live and flourish even after death, a sentiment echoed in an accompanying poem by Huygens. Similarly, the theme of Vor’s poem ‘Struggle between Death and Nature’ is that painting is the closest ally of Nature in conquering death.

RELIGIOUS MESSAGES
Still lifes could convey explicit religious messages. Depictions of flowers had long been accessories in altarpieces and illuminated prayer books, a tradition continued in the seventeenth century by Jan Brueghel the Elder, Seghers, and others who painted garlands of flowers and fruit around religious scenes. (Brueghel and Seghers also employed almost identical garlands for both religious and mythological subjects; see under cat. 4). Viewers must have sought connections between such garlands and the figural scenes they framed. For example, the thorns and thistles depicted by Seghers in a painting probably made for the archbishop of Antwerp (cat. 16), relate unmistakably to Christ’s crown of thorns that Saint Catherine of Sienna grasps in the central scene. De Heem’s representation of the Eucharist (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) is surrounded in fruit and sheaves of grain, which are a direct reminder of the bread of the Mass. A painting of a crucifix set next to a vase of flowers, made jointly by de Heem and Nicolaes van Veerendael (fig. 7), insists that the bouquet be compared with the religious objects, while the inscription ‘Mac naer d’Alderschoonste Bloem / daet en siet men niet om’

(But one does look at the most beautiful flower of all) invites the viewer to contemplate the body of Christ rather than the beauty of the flowers. The artist’s personality of the also affected perceptions of his or her paintings. Maria van Oosterwijk’s still lifes (cat. 6) often contain clear religious inscriptions and a variety of symbolic objects. Described as exceptionally devout, the artist came from a family of Reformed preachers, which no doubt influenced the appreciation of her pictures. Even more famous was Seghers, universally known as Peter Seghers, who was among the most celebrated painters of his time (cats. 23, 26). The fact that he was a Jesuit added to his celebrity, and Seghers clearly signed his pictures with the name of his order in capital letters—JESU. His personality meant that his simple flower paintings without religious scenes (for example, cat. 25) might have been interpreted as religious images. And Seghers was also celebrated in the Protestant north where his works were especially popular at the Hague court. Given this well-defined group of still lifes with religious and moral symbols, it is doubtful whether paintings of flowers lacking explicit texts or obvious religious objects were intended to carry the same moralizing meanings, or whether most viewers would have made such associations. Indeed, because only a
small percentage of Netherlandish still lifes bear any inscriptions at all, it seems unwise to base an understanding of the genre as a whole on isolated examples.

EXHORTATIONS
Many still lifes are directly concerned with the themes of study and work. De Gheyn's monumental still life of 1621 (fig. 8) depicts books, instruments, armor, and sculpture, along with a skull crowned with laurels. A prominent inscription at the bottom urges 'Servite modum, finemque tueri, naturamque sequi' (Observe moderation, be mindful of the final goal, and follow nature), a Neo-Stoic exhortation to the improvement of character through diligence. Rather than merely vanitas symbols, the skull, books, and hourglass in this context also suggest that scholarly work can lead to success. The laurels indicate that accomplishment shall survive death. Painted at the end of his career, at a time when de Gheyn felt challenged by artists such as Torrevis, the still life may have advanced de Gheyn's own desires for a lasting reputation.

Other still lifes from the early seventeenth century take up the theme of temperance (cats. 9, 11), referring not just to the avoidance of gluttony and excess, but also to usefulness and study. Pieter Bruegel's 1560 design for a print shows Temperance, symbolized by a biretta (also seen in Torrevis's still life, cat. 11), governing the liberal arts, including painting. Other still lifes with books may also have been interpreted as exhortations to purposeful study (cats. 15, 18, 27, 28, 34, 67), since books and instruments represent an active mind, while the accompanying timepieces may suggest that time should be used well. Cesare Ripa also makes these objects attributes of 'Studio: Practice in the Arts, studying.' Such paintings are often called 'vanitas' still lifes, which does them scant justice. Books, pens, scientific instruments, candles, and hourglasses were items found in a study, and were often pictured in fifteenth-century Italian
intazia (see fig. 35a in catalogue) as well as in later still lifes like the trompe l'oeil panels by Dou (cat. 35).

Still lifes of books, pens, skulls, candles, and other objects reminded viewers of scholarship, diligence, as well as the passing of time, as the still-life painter Heyman Dullaert wrote in his poem 'To my perishing candle' (Aan mijn uitbrandende kaars):

O soon to be extinguished flame of my candle! Now that you show your progress in diligent investigation Of useful scholarship, in books full of wisdom, so richly laden for the eye eager to learn,
You offer me a book, from which I can learn
The rapidly expired hour of my own fleeting life.37

This mixture of associations may have been a common reaction to still-life images. The few direct contemporary comments on the meaning of still lifes suggest the vagueness and multiplicity of their meaning. Remarkably, in 1578, Blaise de Vigenère had already asserted that paintings of food were 'little pleasures and amusements' that 'do not teach anything, and they serve nothing else than for a greater enjoyment and satisfaction to the eye.'38 In the early decades of the seventeenth century, Cardinal Federico Borromeo, a religious thinker who assembled a rich collection of paintings as contemplative and meditative images, confessed to a lack of sophisticated motivation when he commissioned delightful natural images from Jan Brueghel the Elder.

An allegory can be found here in the pleasure of flowers as well as in snow frozen with ice—these are the extremes of nature, just as the earth represents winter and the sky in turn represents spring. But, on reflection, when I ordered the painting, I did not think at all of these symbols or allegories.39

Instead, as we shall see, Borromeo prized Brueghel's abilities to render natural wonders, whether landscapes or flowers. Similarly, in 1709, de Lairese complained:

Although we have said before that the famous Kalf excelled in still life above others, yet, like his predecessors and successors, he could give little reason for his depictions, why he should do this or that, but he only depicted what came to mind... without ever having thought of producing something of importance that might contain special meaning, or could be applied to something.40

It is likely that de Lairese knew Willem Kalf in Amsterdam. Could Kalf really give no explanation of his work, or did de Lairese simply regard Kalf's intentions as unimportant? Since de Lairese was principally interested in classical history and mythology, he assigned greater significance to still lifes consisting of allegories or the attributes of a professional, one example being Govert Flinck's portrait of Gerard Hulft, the town secretary of Amsterdam (fig. 9). Nonetheless, de Lairese's statement shows that some observers could discern no profound symbolism in still lifes.

**Emblems**

One of the most beautiful Netherlandish emblem books, Roemer Visscher's Statenboeken of 1614, has been frequently employed to interpret still lifes.41 However, these richly creative images and texts were intended neither to index standard meanings nor to 'decode' oil paintings, since the format, function, and audience of moralizing prints could not be more different from that of still-life paintings. Moreover, emblems are a fully independent category of art in themselves, possessing complex, witty, poetic, and at times even contradictory meanings. One of the images most frequently connected with still lifes, Roemer Visscher's emblem of seashells illustrated with a print by Claes Jansz Visscher (fig. 10), is captioned, 'Tis misstellig waer een geck zijn gelt uen leijt' (It is odd how a fool will spend his money). The text states that with seashells, their 'only beauty is their rarity,'
a sentiment that most painters and viewers, not to mention shell collectors, would have emphatically disputed. Yet this emblem is cited at nearly every occasion shells are depicted, usually with the conclusion that shells are intentional warnings about the foolishness and vanity of worldly possessions. But rather than wagging fingers at viewers, most paintings of shells (cats. 7, 23, 32, 34) celebrate the beauty, fragility, and rarity of the objects, which were brought from distant oceans for enthusiastic collectors. Artists clearly revel in their unusual textures and sheens. Roemer Visscher’s emblem remains useful for understanding contemporary attitudes because it embroiders a basic, widely held association of exotic shells: they were highly desirable collectibles, as numerous other texts proclaim. The widest and most natural reference of shells were that they were delightful, unusual, and sometimes expensive rarities.

Visscher’s emblem illustrating tulips, which warns that ‘a fool and his money are soon parted’ (Een dwaes en zijn gelt zijn haest ghescheijden) is clearly a commentary on the increasingly high prices paid for tulip bulbs in Holland that eventually led to the tulip crash of 1639. This disaster, appreciated then as now as a humorous example of financial foolishness, is an unavoidable association of nearly all paintings of tulips, especially those produced after 1639, such as Hans Börlenger’s exquisite bouquet (cat. 24).
Another of Visscher’s emblems has been compared so often with Torrentius’s still life (fig. 11; see also cat. 11) that it is sometimes thought that Torrentius must have borrowed his composition from Visscher’s illustration, both made in 1614. Yet the similarities between the two works cannot account for the richness and complexity of the painting by Torrentius, which even on a symbolic level contains crucial elements such as the bridle and the song that are missing from the print. Instead, both print and painting draw from a rich tradition of representations of Temperance, a theme shared by other still lifes of the period such as those by Clara Peeters (cat. 9) and de Heem (fig. 8).

Similarities of detail and motif should not mislead us into thinking that oil paintings were appreciated in the same way as emblems or prints. Still-life paintings present to the viewer entire, independent worlds—carefully selected, composed, and lit. Most emblems and moralizing prints include texts or subsidiary figures that are missing from still-life paintings. Any evaluation of significance of a still life must consider the relationship of the picture as a whole, including its context and style, to its subject.

CELEBRATIONS OF ABUNDANCE

At about the same time Claes Jansz Visscher illustrated Simpoogen, he also produced a large-scale panoramic print of Amsterdam (fig. 12) that places familiar objects, many of them identical to those found in the emblem book, in a rather different context. On the near bank, across the harbor from the city, sits the Maid of Amsterdam, who receives with great pleasure all the most prominent peoples of the world, all with their most excellent trading goods. These include Spaniards who bring wine, olives, figs, and oranges; East Indians who bring pepper, pearls, and gemstones; West Indians who carry sugar, gold, silver, tobacco, parrots; Chinese who have porcelain and silk. Netherlanders provide food for the city, including fish, meat, cheese, butter, milk, and eggs; hunters bring game birds, rabbits, and larger animals in order to adorn all grand meals (om alle groote Maaltijden te versieren). Nearest the central figure can be seen books, a globe, porcelain teacups, and gilt vessels, as well as an artist palette and brushes. In sum, nearly all the objects found in Netherlandish still lifes can be seen in this celebration of commerce and the prosperity of the city. The things depicted in still lifes were intimately associated with the wealth and trade of the Netherlands.

It was well-known in the seventeenth century that ancient Greek and Roman painters had depicted food still lifes. Philostratus in Ekess had employed the term xenia to designate depictions of fruit, honey, milk, and other foods, and in 1578 it was translated by Blaise de Vigenère as les présents rustiques (rustic gifts). The extended commentary to the text states that

fig. 12 Claes Jansz Visscher, Panorama of Amsterdam, dated 1611, etching and engraving, 55.5 x 112 cm., Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
such paintings represented hospitality in the form of 'presents given to one's guest', while the title plate to the chapter shows not only fruit, but also prepared dishes (fig. 14). Food still lifes thus demonstrated the abundance of the farm and rural life generally, and more importantly expressed a bounteous reception. In 1638, Franciscus Junius described xenia as 'when Painters did imitate in their pictures such things as those that had an entire course of mutual hospitality.'

The abundance of country life was expressed in similar fashion by rural and agricultural poetry in the Netherlands, which was largely inspired by the ancient works of Horace and Virgil. The popular Dutch poems devoted to country life, known as 'hoofdchachten,' often praised the rich variety of fruit, vegetables, and game that could be found on rural gardens and estates. Nearly all such poems, including those by Philibert van Borssele, Huysens, and Jan Vos, describe a meal for guests exclusively drawn from produce grown on the estate, a theme that closely mirrors Philostratus's xenia as well as seventeenth-century still lifes.

Petrus Hondius, for example, in De Tyge-schetsen of 1621, described in copious detail the produce of his vegetable and flower gardens, while Jacob Westerbaen, writing in 1654, celebrated the joys of the hunt. These poems share with still lifes a similar set of natural associations.

It is significant that de Vigenère directly compares the ancient paintings of food both to cornucopias and to 'drolleries found in Flanders.' Xenia's essential nature was to welcome guests with displays of abundance, and this too must have been a component of seventeenth-century food still lifes, witnessed especially in the large market and kitchen scenes of Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer, Joannes Fyt, Frans Snijders, and others. These were often conceived in series and must have formed impressive displays. Beuckelaer's series of 1569–70 depicts vegetable, fish, and fowl markets, as well as a kitchen (see fig. 15). This grouping can be considered an illustration of the process of procuring and preparing a banquet, especially since Beuckelaer's vegetable market takes places in the countryside near an orchard, while the other two markets are clearly urban, and the final scene is the interior of a large kitchen. Around 1618, Snijders produced a cycle of four market scenes for Jacques van Ophem, the receiver general for Brussels (State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg). Imposing in the extreme, these depictions of game, fruit, vegetables, and fish markets aided the public ambitions of their patron by showing him to be a generous host. Snijders also painted a game still life for the archdukes Albert and Isabella, and several others were acquired by the Marqués de Leganés who presented them to Philip IV. In addition, Claes Peters painted a series of still lifes (fig. 16, fig 3 on p. 41) that depict raw foods—fowl and game birds, fish with artichokes—as well as tables laid with dried fruit, nuts, a pie, and other cooked foods. A similar range of foodstuffs can
be seen in Alexander Adriaenssen’s series of six food still lifes (see fig. 3 on p. 98). The idea that guests should be welcomed with displays of abundance indicative of a well-stocked household can be judged clearly where the original setting of still lifes can be reconstructed. For Prince Johan Maurits (and perhaps even for the Mauritshuis), Albert Eckhout painted the decoration of an entire room consisting of Brazilian figures surrounded by still lifes of exotic Brazilian fruits (cats. 392–b). Jacob van Campen similarly decorated a room in a house near Amersfoort with baskets overflowing with fruit interspersed among allegorical scenes (see fig. 9 on p. 96). The collections in Florence preserve still lifes by Willem van Aelst, Otto Marotus van Schrieck, and Bartolomeo Bimbi that originally adorned the various palaces and villas in and around Florence. Bimbi’s imposing paintings of figs, cherries, flowers, and game were installed in La Topaia, the summer villa of Cosimo III, and welcomed guests with bountiful produce. The stadhouders’s palaces in Holland were also decorated with cornucopia and other still lifes. At the palace of Het Loo in Arnhem, the staircase was decorated with paintings (now lost) by Pieter de Grebber and Paulus Bor showing cupids surrounded by festoons of flowers, while Moses van Wiericouck’s Fresco included a cornucopia. The paintings at the entrance to the Oranjerie at the Huis ten Bosch consist of four triumphal scenes that, while related to the military and political feats of Frederik Hendrik, also display flowers, fruit, and other produce. These still-life subjects signaled the wealth and prosperity of the Netherlands under the stadhouders. To the right of the door, armor and precious vessels are carried in, as flowers are strewn on the ground (fig. 17), while on the left, overseas trade and imperial conquests are praised as exotic birds, Brazilian artifacts, Chinese porcelain, and rare fruits are displayed (fig. 18).
Significantly, while Snyders created large paintings of markets and kitchens for grand houses, he also crafted smaller pictures of food for more modest settings, the chaotic eruptions of market and kitchen pieces being turned for display in an urban household, although a sense of artful disorganization still prevailed (cat. 14). Usually combining game with fruit, Snyders's smaller works continue to evoke the bounty of the countryside as a welcome to guests. Smaller paintings of raw comestibles also evoked the bounty of the land. At the end of the seventeenth century, paintings of vegetables and fruit took decidedly different forms as artists focused more intently on a handful of evocatively lit items (figs. 19, 20, cats. 73, 75), although the suggestion of a well-provisioned household remains.

Game still lifes certainly possess a wide range of associations, but one of their most basic is as a depiction of food. Indeed game animals can be found in the markets painted by Aertsen and Beuckeleer (cats. 1, 2) and are a common feature in the work of Snyders and Fyt (cats. 14, 43). Snyders showed game being sold
at a public market (cat. 13) soon after Antwerp laws were revised to permit sales. Tradition has reserved for the nobility, hunting in the Dutch republic became somewhat less restricted in the course of the seventeenth century, in part because the definition of the nobility itself began to loosen. Some areas permitted wealthy citizens without title to hunt. In the middle and late seventeenth century, game still lifes take on an elegance and sophistication that seem to indicate an upper class or even aristocratic clientele, although this may be true for much of still-life painting generally.

Many hunting still lifes were indeed produced for princely and aristocratic patrons. Van Aelst painted game and hunting equipment for the Medici court in Florence (Palazzo Pitti, Florence) and on his return to Holland repeated many of these motifs for his Amsterdam clients (cat. 61). Around 1700, Jan Weenix undertook a mammoth cycle of hunting still lifes for the Schoss Reinsberg, the hunting lodge of Johann Wilhelm von Pfalz-Neuburg, elector palatine of the Rhine (fig. 4 on p. 90). Simultaneously, Weenix painted similar, if much smaller, still lifes for his Dutch patrons. Presumably, the princely patrons of van Aelst and Weenix, with their large hunting estates and grand retinues, regarded hunting still lifes very differently from Dutch collectors. Did bourgeois owners of game pieces gaze longingly at aristocratic activities in which they could not hope to partake? Or did the pleasures of hunting, whether of small or large game, cross class boundaries? Game still lifes remained images of food even as they became more opulent and ostentatious.

Paintings of game and of hunting equipment (cats. 40, 41, 43, 61, 76) became a still life specialty in the second half of the seventeenth century. For example, Cornelis Leidenborgh devoted himself to the smoky colors and soft textures of dead game birds glimpsed in dark settings (fig. 24). Both van Hoogstraten and de Laiverse approved of game still lifes, if somewhat reluctantly. De Laiverse was unhappy with paintings of horse bridles and hunting equipment, but remembered their popularity: "If these last named are not entirely improper, along with boars, deer, hares, as well as pheasants, partridges, and other dead birds, which generally Princes and Aristocrats like to hang." Cornelis Brint painted an imposing trompe l'oeil

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fig. 19 Hubert van Ravesteyn, Colloges and Apples on a Table, wood, 33 x 37.5 cm.
Dordrecht Museum, Dordrecht.
still life showing hunting rifles, horns, nets, and other paraphernalia (fig. 22), and the subject proved popular with artists such as Anthony van Leemans and Cornelis Norbertus Gijbcrechts, who made his paintings of hunting equipment for the Danish court.

Many still lifes can be considered displays of food and precious objects, rather than specific meals (cats. 31, 32, 42, 59). The nature of a credenza permitted the artful and capricious arrangement of a variety of fruit, flowers, vessels, decorative objects, and even game and fish. Such still lifes are quite different from the public settings of markets or the practical facilities found in kitchens and pantries. Several painters active in the middle of the 1600s, most notably de Heem, painted increasingly elaborate displays of food, vessels, and collector’s rarities. Whether depicting fruit, game, foodstuffs, or precious vessels, Netherlandish still lives retained the essential aspect of celebrating abundance.

FRUIT AND FLOWERS
Paintings of fruit and flowers were commonly paired during the seventeenth century, a tradition that may have had an unusual beginning. One of the earliest still lifes of the Baroque is Caravaggio’s Basket of Fruit (fig. 23), painted sometime between 1595 and 1601, and soon acquired by Cardinal Federico Borromeo. Caravaggio had already perfected many of the devices that would become familiar in still lifes produced in the Netherlands. Rather than a definable interior setting, the background is a field of unarticulated color that flattens the space of the picture, while in addition, the basket hangs over the edge of the table, casting a noticeable shadow. As the first still life to enter Borromeo’s impressive collection, it played an influential role on the development of Netherlandish flower painting for it seems to have stimulated the Cardinal’s interest in naturalistic still life. By 1606 he began to acquire paintings of flowers from Jan Brueghel the Elder. In one important sense, Brueghel’s flower paintings were influenced by Caravaggio because Borromeo seems to have sought works to accompany the Basket of Fruit. He wanted to find a pendant to it, since in 1615 he wrote: ‘It was made by Michelangelo da Caravaggio, who acquired a reputation in Rome, I would have liked to place another similar basket nearby, but no other having attained the beauty and incomparable excellence of this one, it remained alone.’

Even if Brueghel’s flower paintings may have been judged inferior to Caravaggio’s fruit, at least in the eyes of Cardinal Borromeo, the passage demonstrates that paintings of flowers and fruit were natural companions. Jonas Hoefnagel in 1592 also connected depictions of fruit and flowers: ‘Wisdom produces the fruit of life, and science itself bears flowers: the former is useful, the latter decorative.’ Balthasar van der Ast painted pendants
of fruit and flowers for the stadhouder and Van Aelst painted at least one pair. At the end of the 1600s, Rachel Ruysch and Jan van Huysum (cat. 78) frequently painted pairs of pictures showing fruit and flowers.

Oil paintings of flowers arranged in vases arose almost simultaneously in the first decade of the seventeenth century in several different cities, probably as a complex dialogue drawing from similar sources. Karel van Mander in 1604 reported that de Gheyn, then working in Leiden or The Hague, had already painted vases of flowers, one of which was sold to Rudolf II (for a later example (see fig. 200 p. 55)). Roelant Savery's earliest known flower paintings were made in Amsterdam or Prague in 1603 (fig. 6a in catalogue), perhaps inspired by de Gheyn's example. Dated 1605 are the earliest known examples by Jan Brueghel the Elder, working in Antwerp, and Ambrosius Bosschaert, working in Middelburg. There were almost certainly earlier examples by these artists that do not survive. Brueghel had visited Prague in 1604 and may have seen have still lifes by Savery or de Gheyn.

In 1606, Brueghel began a flower painting for Cardinal Borromeo (fig. 24) to whom he described some of his intentions:

Without instructions, I have begun and destined for your excellency a bunch of various flowers that will be found very beautiful, as much for naturalness as for the beauty and rarity of various flowers, some are unknown and little seen in this area; for this, I have been to Brussels in order to depict some few flowers from nature that are not found in Antwerp.71

Brueghel stresses three factors: the naturalism of the painting, the beauty of the flowers, and finally their rarity. In a later letter, he repeated the same issues, adding a statement about the amount of effort he has lavished on the painting of flowers all made after nature I have put all my ability into this picture.
Moreover, we are more pleased when we see a painted flower competing with a living one, than in view of the effect of nature, in the other the genius of the painter, in each the goodness of God. 77

A debate ensues as to whether it is the painted garden 'grows and pleases even in midwinter.' His companion claims that a painting has no fragrance and 'a picture, too, grows old.'

“Yes, but it’s longer-lived than we are.”

This influential passage firmly established the idea that a painting could provide delight in winter and even outlast death. For example, the text was used by Joris Hoefnagel in 1597 to caption two depictions of fruits and flowers (Musée du Louvre, Sibiu). 28 Brueghel wrote to Cardinal Borromeo that his paintings would be a special delight in winter, while Borromeo himself stated that images of the fruits and flowers of spring were a visual delight in the winter, when the real things were unavailable. 29 Jan Vos wrote in his 'Flowers painted by van Aelst' (Bloemen door van Aelst gesigneerd) that van Aelst's bouquets (cat. 60) provide enjoyment in winter that can even exceed nature: 30

Here comes the sweet spring to appear in the wintry time,
By him who with her own brush, symbolizes all who paint.
Begin, now that she is said, to lengthen out of pure regret. 60

Given the considerable tradition of literature devoted specifically to paintings of flowers, it may be less relevant to rely on literature about flowers generally as a means of interpreting paintings. Because some texts and emblems describe the perishability of real flowers, still lifes have been assigned identical meanings. 31 However, oil paintings of flowers ought to be understood very differently from textual descriptions of flowers, if only because oil paintings were often praised in poetry as exceeding the durability of the real thing. Hoefnagel's Acrisius of 1592, a set of prints illustrating a vast array of insects, flowers, and fruit, contains a broad selection of texts that range from the sorrowful and religious to the joyous, witty, and bawdy. Some texts evoke the short life span of flowers, while others proclaim the joy of spring. 32 Even the work of Seghers, which has so much explicit religious imagery, was appreciated in the seventeenth century for the beauty of the flowers, as Joachim van Sandrecht, Joost van den Vondel, and Jan Vos write. 33 These expressions of delight focus not just on the beauty of the flowers, but also on the power of the artist, the imitative and evocative qualities of painting providing equal measures of pleasure.

The subsidiary objects in still lifes have often been interpreted as various symbols, insects in particular being thought of as destructive creatures that consume flowers and fruit. Yet Joris Hoefnagel's Acrisius and the illuminated manuscript (part of the Four Elements, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)
fig. 24 Jan Breugel the Elder, *Still of Flowers*, 1600, copper, 63 × 45 cm, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

* CONTAINED UNDER THE NAME OF STILL LIFE
are reminders, echoed in contemporary texts, that insects were intensely studied as marvels of nature. The painted insects, perfection in miniature, were perhaps less warnings about the vanity of life, than about the microcosm of nature. Except for the works of Jan van Kessel (fig. 23), which mimic the look of these studies, Hoefnagel's compositions have no successors in seventeenth-century Netherlandish painting. However, insects, worms, and snails are almost ubiquitous accessories in still lifes, especially flower pieces, and seem to act as observers and onlookers. In environments usually devoid of human participants, they are surrogates for viewers, exploring the intangibles of bouquets, feeling the surfaces of various materials, and viewing objects from different viewpoints.

Rarities

Jan Brueghel emphasized that some of the flowers he depicted were extremely difficult to find, and almost a hundred years later van Huysum also sought unusual species. De Lairesse also urged painters to choose rarities: 'the beauty and virtue of a still life comes only from the most highly selected objects; I say selected, meaning that out of all flowers, the most beautiful and rarest must be chosen, excluding the common and poor; similarly with fruit and other things.' Brueghel also compared the beauty and rarity of the flowers he painted with other objects he included in the picture (fig. 24):

Under the flowers I have made a jewel, with medallions, and handmade rarities. Then Your Excellency can judge if the flowers do not surpass gold objects and jewels. In this box, I send twelve of the most beautiful and rarest shells that come from the Indies on Dutch ships. Please, Excellency, do not regard them as mere trinkets.

This is a clear indication of the preciousness and desirability of sea shells, which were here meant to be directly compared with a still life. Since the sixteenth century, shell collecting had been an aspect of intellectual activity, and Erasmus and Dürer were reportedly avid collectors. In the early 1660s, the collection of Corneel van Blyenburg in Amsterdam was commemorated in poetry by Philibert van Borsselee (1614), while the collector Jan Goverssen was portrayed with some prized specimens by Cornells van Haarlem and Hendrik Goeree. Rembrandt also had a large collection of shells and produced a striking etching of one example.

The collecting of natural and artificial objects became enormously popular in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. Whether called 'Kunstkammer,' 'Wunderkammer,' or 'Curiositeiten-kamer,' such collections were not only a sign of wealth and status, but also demonstrated intellectual discernment and scholarship. Although there was no fixed pattern or set of rules, certain broad principles were shared by most collectors, especially a fondness for mixing natural objects such as shells, fossils, seeds, preserved animals, and ethnographic objects with works of art made of unusual materials. Especially important were the courts of Vienna and Copenhagen, which not only collected objects on a massive scale, but also acquired optically striking still lifes by Samuel van Hoogstraten, Wallerant Vaillant, and Cornelius Norbertus Gijsbrechts, objects of wonder in themselves.

Almost all the unusual objects depicted in still lifes could also have been seen in sophisticated collections. The collections of Rudolf II in Prague, Charles I in London, and the court in Copenhagen are inventoried in great detail, but good records also survive of more middle-class collectors in the Netherlands. Painters were among the most avid collectors of objects and rarities, as seen most obviously in the households of Rembrandt and Rubens. The impressive collections found in Amsterdam and Antwerp help us gauge the associations of still life pictures. Skulls and skeletons were objects of scientific interest and study. Globes and scientific instruments were valued both for their utility and their beauty (cat. 35). Gold and silver vessels had obvious value, but Chinese porcelain also commanded high prices. One further example might be the swords that can often be glimpsed in still lifes and depictions of studios. The Japanese sword in Harmen Steenwijck's painting (cat. 36) has been interpreted as a symbol of Christianity or of wealth, but it might be more relevant to remember that Asian swords were highly desirable collector's items, found in the royal collections of Denmark and England, as well as in Rembrandt's atelier.

Frans Francken, Willem Kalf, Jan van der Heyden, and others (cats 12, 45–51) recorded specific objects, even if the owner of
the painting may not have owned the particular objects shown. While some collectors commissioned still lifes, depictions of wondrous objects in general reminded all viewers of the passion of collecting, of the exotic lands that produced such rarities, and even of the Dutch trade that brought goods to Europe (as Jan Brueghel indicated).

The theme of abundance, celebration, and collecting found in some Netherlandish still lifes might have been expressions of the power and sophistication of owners. Indeed some Netherlandish still lifes are so sumptuous and opulent, like the banqueting tables staffed by African pages, that they seem uncomfortably aggressive assertions of wealth and status. In the seventeenth century, as with our own age, the idea of luxury was full of contradictory associations of comfort and excess, as well as pride mixed with guilt. 'Luxuria' was seen as an evil, identified with lust, gluttony, and excess. However, no source connects still-life painting with the concept of excess, although some scholars have interpreted food and fine objects as warnings about the evils of luxury and the emptiness of worldly existence. No less moralistic, Roland Barthes and other writers have seen in Dutch still lifes an obsessive concern with material goods, an indication of the consumer fetish. It may be prudent to set aside such judgments. While no doubt some observers condemned elaborate still lifes as glutonous, others may have found pleasure in abundant displays suggesting comfort and welcome. Similarly, images of expensive and rare items, whether shells, gold cups, or imported porcelain, might have been seen as vain excess, although more often they would have recalled the enthusiasm of collectors and the elegance of beautiful things.

THE STILL LIFE AS TOUR DE FORCE

Still lifes were virtuoso tests of an artist's skill, the intricacies of composition, arrangement of space, and rendering of materials were all problems to be conquered. From its very beginnings, Netherlandish still lifes were praised as tours de force. Karel van Mander commended Aertsen's paintings for their sophisticated reflections and astonishing verisimilitude. Aertsen's subjects and devices proved influential for the development of later still lifes. In the foreground of one painting (fig. 26) a table has been set with baked goods and a pewter pitcher, while a vase of flowers along with linen and pottery rests atop a cabinet. Protruding into our space is the open door of the cabinet, atop which hangs a money bag, a common motif in later still lifes. This collapsing of space and perspective is underscored by the meat resting on a dish in the upper part of the composition, which reaches into our space. Later artists continued Aertsen's experiments with space. In Claesz's 1613 painting (Musée du Louvre, Paris), a viol protrudes forward, inviting the viewer to pick up and play the instrument. Many still-life painters allowed a knife or plate to hang off the edge of the table, just as open cabinets challenge the viewer's perception of space (cats. 353–53, 56).

The narrow spatial depth encountered in most Netherlandish still lifes heightens the importance of composition and arrangement. Objects can be brought close together without the distractions of a larger setting, allowing the viewer to attend to color, texture, and form. Still-life painters often combined disparate objects that share peculiar similarities. Willem Heda habitually arranged several objects of silvery and gray tones
to display his prowess at distinguishing surface and hardness (cat. 22): Joannes Fyt compared the similar textures of baskets, thistles, and animal fur in order to subtly differentiate forms. Some artists like David Bailly, sought to include a bewildering variety of materials in one picture to display their skills (cat. 38), while others contrived to show a single object from different angles (fig. 27, cat. 72), a strategy common in flower painters (cats. 3, 24). De Lievrese seemed to understand that reductive settings allowed the powers of still-life painters to be fully displayed when he recommended that objects be set against a flat wall or wood paneling.

Many painters called attention to their craft by including the tools of their trade in their paintings such as palettes, brushes, and other objects commonly found in artist's studios such as books, sculptures, and globes. Some painters—Bailly, van Beyeren, Gijsbrechts, van Hoogstraten, Lutrichius, Peeters, and van Roestraeten—showed themselves in their still lifes as reflections in mirrors or vessels, as painted portraits, or through letters or awards. Whether witnessed in such self-portraits and autobiographical objects, amazing visual tricks, or the haunting of artistic ability, still-life painters were among the most self-conscious of artists.

While many still lifes depicted rare or expensive objects, the paintings themselves were precious objects worthy of collecting. This mingling of the real and the depicted is seen most vividly in a story recorded by Cardinal Borromeo. Jan Brueghel the Elder requested payment for a flower piece, probably the work in fig. 24, by painting into the still life a piece of jewelry of the equivalent price:

But no less violent is the battle of the flowers, whose value Brueghel himself, the artist, indicated with a most charming invention. He painted at the foot of the vase or diamond, the sight of which makes us understand that which we would have thought just the same: that the value of the work is the same as the gem.

The art market provides one of clearest indicators of the status of still life, especially as foreign courts eagerly sought the works of the Netherlandish still-life painters. Indeed without the patronage of foreign rulers, still-life paintings would have developed in a very different manner. Roelant Saverij achieved considerable success in Prague at the court of Rudolf II, who also acquired still lifes by Aertsen and de Gheyn. Brueghel's early flower pieces were created for Cardinal Federico Borromeo in Milan. Van Aelst achieved success at the court in Florence, a pattern repeated by van Hoogstraten and Wallerand Vaillant in Vienna, and Gijsbrechts in Copenhagen. Rachel Ruysh and Jan Weenix received the patronage of the court in Düsseldorf.

DELIGHTFUL DECEITS
The idea that art is a deception was a common theme in seventeenth-century writing on art that derives ultimately from ancient texts about the convincing verisimilitude of painting. Paintings of all subjects were praised for their deceptive abilities. It is sometimes thought that a trompe l'oeil picture could be called a 'bedriegertje' or an 'oogenbedrieger' (deceptions, eye deceptions) in the seventeenth century, but in fact this cannot be documented. The terms 'trompe l'oeil' or 'quodlibet' are of much more recent vintage. Still lifes were sometimes singled out for their deceptive nature. Karel van Mander specifically praised Aertsen's kitchen scenes, saying the artist is 'indeed a great dexterous, sly deceiver of human eyes, also an amusing liar.' Joost van den Vondel claimed to be deceived by flowers painted by Seghers, as well as by paintings depicted by Cornelis Bosje (cat. 55); Arnold Houbraken similarly praised the still lifes of van Hoogstraten.

Obviously deceit and deception are not necessarily good things, so limits should be defined. This is an remarkably consistent theme in seventeenth-century writing on art, beginning in 1657 with Franciscus Junius citation of Plutarchos that good pictures present 'delusions' (ooghenkapsules) that are 'pleasant, so doth it not deserve the least reproach' (genoeghieck ende onschandelijk bedroogh). The idea was repeated in almost identical fashion by Jan de Brune the Younger in 1669 and most famously in 1678 by van Hoogstraten, who declared that a 'perfect painting is like a mirror of nature, which makes things that do not exist appear to exist.'

fig. 17 Albrecht (T) van der Schoor, Skulls on a Table, canvas 63.5 x 73 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
rejuvenated in the seventeenth century. Blaise de Vigenère compared Philostratus' ancient category of food painting called xenia to Flemish drolleries. Ferdinand III was impressed not only by van Hoogstraten's still life but also by a trompe l'oeil by Sébastien Stoskopff which he was given in 1651 (see fig. 8 on p. 64). Sandrart reports that the emperor actually laughed at the artistic deception of a painted print that he attempted to lift off the canvas. More ordinary observers also delighted in clever paintings. An inventory drawn up in Amsterdam in 1678 lists: 'Some amusement before and around a chimney by Britz' (Emige snakery voor en om de schoorsteen van Brits), which may be a cut-out picture that extended in front of and above the chimney. The use of the word 'snakery' (meaning 'drollery' or 'joke') clearly evokes the sense of fun of an illusionistic painting.

Samuel Pepys, the English diarist who can represent the intelligent observer who was neither artist nor professional critic, was eager to be delighted by trompe l'oeil paintings. In January 1663, he visited Thomas Powys where he seems to have seen the illusionistic painting by van Hoogstraten now at Dyrham Park. 'But above all things, I do the most admire his piece of perspective especially, he opening me the closet door and there I saw that there is nothing but only a plain picture hung upon the wall.' On a return visit, Pepys exclaimed anew, 'Here I was a refresh delighted with Mr. Powys house and pictures of perspective, being strange things, to think how they do delude one's eye, that meltirks it would make a man doubtful of sweating that ever he saw anything.' Such responses are reminders of the sense of awe and pure pleasure viewers brought to convincingly painted and artfully constructed still lifes in the seventeenth century.

Perhaps more than figural painting, still lifes lend themselves to multiple levels of understanding since still lifes generally lack a text-based narrative and viewers could bring a variety of understandings to pictures. Some viewers undoubtedly sought religious and moral meanings in still lifes, as they would have in nearly all the pictures they viewed. Other persons, probably far more numerous, would have brought associations connected with daily life in the Netherlands. It is perhaps easy to forget that so many of the objects depicted in still lifes were actually eaten, consumed, used, or collected, and therefore might have possessed natural references. Very likely, collectors of books, shells, skulls, porcelain, jewels and so forth, also purchased still lifes, making the fascination with objects and with the depiction itself intimately connected.

The search for a single meaning of any still life ought to be avoided. So much scholarship implies that if one is clever, careful, or diligent enough, the true meaning of an image will be revealed. The specific context of each painting—its composition, handling and light, and even its mood—demands individual consideration. Moreover, many still lifes simply contain too
many different objects to fit into a single reading. Individual motifs have multiple and ambiguous associations, which leaves any discussion of meaning open-ended. Still lives frequently leave traces of their making with signs of the artistry and craft of the painter. Many artists have included self-portraits, personal possessions, or the tools of their trade lying about their still lives. Moreover, in the displays of artistic prowess that captured the textures, surfaces, and shadows of objects, still lifes were often the virtuoso pieces—tests of the painter’s power to delight.

I am grateful for the advice and assistance of Celeste Bosstal, Juan Engelhaupt, and Ben Bula.

1 Van Hoogstraten 1678, p. 23: zwijzige frote, slecht bloemenkussen, en een veelvleugelige ruiters in peulen en vazen; en Wijitaertsen en schone Fees en Alberico, & Meloen en Cartoon, en een helderem Wijzijsomer op een zwaargewicht Driu, met wietje en gewitje Papelijntjes, Roomse Heides, en Kudelkaise Tarmelen, of Myrrijakken en Vainuis in dez en even uwe. Ofby bestelren kunst met alleenlijk kerst, van Visco en Viesch, en bekendhoo多了, en er was onder den niet van stille leven begrepen ez.

2 For example, paintings of tobacco and smoking equipment are scarcely mentioned in inventories, although art historical literature often calls such paintings "tubakjes." In fact, this term is almost never used in the seventeenth century to denote a painting of such. Isolated examples can be found of "tubakjes" ([Hoogstraten, 1678; see Ridius 1615, p. 188]; "tabakschijfjes" ([Hoogstraten, 1678], and "tubakbanquettetje" (Antwerp, 1615) and Amsterdam, 1611) and "bannenijtje van Tabac" (Amsterdam, 1611). Paintings called "eens bloem en een tabak" (Amsterdam, 1609; by van Heyden; see Bristius 1615, p. 449; or "een schijfje van een tabakje en een toba" (Amsterdam, 1618; by Goyet 1621), but these are diminutives of tobacco rather than as a term for a painting. "Tubakheerschilderijen" occur after 1700.

3 In addition, although it may seem like a small point, the often-used terms "broukje" and "brouckje" rarely occur in these exact forms, but are more commonly encountered in inventories as "broucket," "brouck," "broukeken," "broukje," or "brouckje." See Appendix.

4 Van Mander 1664, fol. 337 (Grono, ch. 273-548) see Merten 1753, vol. 1, p. 201; Hoogerduijn 1878, see Malerdrucke der Ravevrescherde dreren, i.e., in Langeheer Pietersdatseraerse (Haarlem, 1639); and later in de Leeuw 1684, p. 8. See van Hoogstraten 1678, p. 188; Holstiesch 1469, no. 3-4.

5 Tersteeven Van Peeter van Aris, inventory of Judith Wijenbokke van Voss, Delft, 1615, p. 1436 noted by van Hoogstraten 1678, p. 142; and Peeters van Voss 1689, p. 141. No earlier example has been found of "stillleeven," while the considerable span of time before the next usage makes doubt of the word’s currency.


7 Stasius, of the 1668, p. 211. Similar terms occur only rarely in inventories: Haarlem, 1678; 1. stuk van eenigel seschijfjes koffeetjes; Haarlem, 1678; "Elinestate sesschijfjes;" Goyet 1621, 36. no. 186; N.-Z. 1536. Dick van Bloejkwed in Buchwyndte van der Delft, 1665, p. 825, wrote of a "schijf van stille leven opgeset" (painter of still-laying good).

8 Duverger 1668, no. 146, "Schoone potten gields bij voeter: een Kabinet, een van Dovel, een van Blumenen, een van Schone, een van seschijfjes." Still life painting from the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century is well known for its depictions of objects in an extended still-life setting. This is not surprising, as the genre was well established by the beginning of the eighteenth century. However, the term "stille leven" is commonly encountered in London auction catalogues beginning in 1689 (18 June 1689). Sanderson 1654, p. 31, employed the term "dead-standing things" to describe still lives that were not flowered. And in dead-standing things, Littlehouse [probably Simon Luticherry], a Dutchman. The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford, 1984, p. 346, specializes that the term "still life" originally meant "living things portrayed in a state of rest." However, all early usages indicate depictions of "still standing things;" de Peau de Voss 1689, p. 141, similarly restate the same.

9 Other terms were employed in England. The 1649 inventory of Charles I's paintings lists six on several occasions a Dutch banquet (Millot 1700, pp. 241, 375). The success of Peter Lely’s collection of 1641-1650 is A Vanity of Reuerences.

10 De Lairesse 1674, vol. 2, p. 234: "still life" was used for the still life genre. Dutch still life represents a large and vibrant tradition, and the term "still life" is still used in reference to these works. Yet the development of this genre has been a slow and complex process. The term "still life" has been used to describe a wide range of subjects, from still-life paintings to decorative objects, and from everyday items to still-life compositions.
1 The term 'vanitas' is often used to describe works of art that allude to the transience of life and the vanity of human achievements. It is often associated with still life painting, which was a popular genre in the Dutch Golden Age. Vanitas paintings typically feature symbols of mortality, such as skulls, hourglasses, and decaying flowers, to remind viewers of the temporary nature of life.

2 For example, the painting "Vanitas" by Willem van der Heyst, 1650, shows a skull, a hourglass, a mirror, and a hourglass, which are common vanitas symbols. The painting's title, "Vanitas," means "vanity" or "vanity of vanities," and it serves as a reminder of the fleeting nature of life.

3 The Dutch term "vanitas" is often translated as "vanity" or "vanity of vanities," and it serves as a reminder of the fleeting nature of life. The word is derived from the Latin word "vanitas," which means "vanity" or "vanity of vanities," and it is often used in the context of still life paintings to remind viewers of the temporary nature of life.

4 For example, the painting "Vanitas" by Jan Jansz. de Bisschop, 1650, shows a skull, a hourglass, and a mirror, which are common vanitas symbols. The painting's title, "Vanitas," means "vanity" or "vanity of vanities," and it serves as a reminder of the fleeting nature of life.

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to be flowers, Jones 1955, pp. 81, 82 note 87, observes that in 1627 Brueghel did paint a basket of flowers, although not for Borromeo (see 1959, no. 312, fig. 271). 

58 (note 189, fig. 135).

59 Vignau-Wilberg 1994, pp. 84, 85, 157 (part IV, no. 69) 'Spiegelsia flexuosa fiori e vasa, fiori in specie statum: Boemem: Prospect illa, sed haec omnes."

60 Bedini 1983, p. 219, letter of 14 April 1666 'seminarum iuxta principia et desinendo a V.S.III. suam ideam de variis fiori quib plerumque necessarii multo bello tanta per facta naturaleza come et intere variis fiori in questo parte aliqui incertia e horum vero posse per quod in se statio a Brussella per rursum aliqui fiori del natural, che non mi mue in Avenio... Bedini's transcriptions from the letters preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, are more accurate than those in Corelli 1880 (compare ibid., p. 65). On 27 July, Brueghel wrote again describing the still life (Bedini 1983, pp. 119-115): the phrase 'del natural" is repeated in a letter of 25 August (see note 92 below). On 25 August, the correspondence between Brueghel and Borromeo has been thoroughly and carefully studied by Freundson 1896, Bedini 1985, and Boreniukowej-de Roz 1990 and 1996. On Borromeo, see Qüest 1984, Jones 1980, Borromeo 1990.

61 Bedini 1983, pp. 111-121, letter from Brueghel to Borromeo dated 25 August 1666. "Il quadro detti fiori testi susti del naturali in destro quadro li fiori tanto quanto sapio fiori; Credo che non mi fa' mai fiori tant' ricco et vari fiori, fiori con simil dileggiosa d'innativa fiora un bel vedere alusioi colori arrivano appresso poi il natural." 

62 Villand 2004, p. 269; 270; 271; 280; 289.

63 "De accessis de non hue lor in eis insigni ordinatio in eis cras non alii florem creant." 

64 Bedini 1983, p. 218, letter to Ercole Bianchi, 27 April 1666: 'Gli fiori besogni fare alle prime sera desiglio di botanica tali fiori vengono in queste mari, e prima inscrizione del belgiuio giungere in nome e grand diacstenzione." 

65 Several paintings by Van Huysum bear double dates; see for example the work in the National Gallery, London, no. 796. A pair of paintings in the Mountain collection are dated 1732/1732 and 1727/1733 (Cran 1956, no. 11, 115). In 1744, Van Huysum wrote to the agent of the Duke of Medelburg about de- lying to a commission; Schleske 1980, p. 141. 

66 From 'The Godly Fare' (Carnival), Erasmus 1997, vol. 1, p. 179. For the Latin original, see Caprons 1973, vol. 1, p. 216. 

67 Watercolor on vellum; see Frankfurter 1933, pp. 108, 399, 398. 

68 These two works are apparently pendant since Erasmus's text is divided between them.


70 Vignau-Wilberg 1994, p. 65, also quoted in Houbrecht 1916, vol. 1, p. 391: "Hier komen de lieve lente van winterschijf verschromen..." 

71 Voss 1682, p. 656, also quoted in Houbrecht 1916, vol. 1, p. 391: "Sei la dere lente per winter schijven..."

72 Voss 1682, p. 656, also quoted in Houbrecht 1916, vol. 1, p. 391: "Oiet om een overkoeling." 

73 No such element is mentioned by the Van Huysum's letters. The flowers here are not flowers, but flowers that resemble flowers of the same kind..." 

74 Jones 1955, p. 21, letter of 24 August 1666. "Senti che il fior di fiori et di fiori de stessi colori che tu mi hai di Horst..."

75 In his "Kunst-Camper" described in the bankaunip Bank of 1669 were 'et groote quantiteit hoores, seegewassen / geweekt op "et leven afgegonen en veel andere raffinades"; Zachau, von der Metzen 1996, p. 299ff. For the early auction, see Schell 1969, p. 65. On shelf collecting in the Netherlands, see Amsterdam 1983; Copenhaghen 1985.

76 On Rudolf II, see Bauer, Hinz 1906, for Charles I, see Millar 1960, Milner 1971; for the Copenhagen Kunstkammer, see Dam-Johansen 1980 and Quaadestrup 1991. An impressive example of a bourgeois "Cammerij" is the collection of a Christiana Postern, an apothecary in Leiden; see Poert 1962. See also Rembrandt's collection (Rosenau, van den Meulen 1970; Schelte 1983) and generally Amsterdam 1992.

77 Voss 1682, p. 538, derived a painter's studio: 'Hier hangen schilder...." 

78 From Stofft's 1983, p. 175, praised Seghers' 'great diligence and patience' (grooten piets en Susterken) in representing flowers. Voss 1682, vol. 3, p. 497 (the work claimed to have been devoured by Seghers' colorist). Van 1680, p. 352, compared Seghers' paintings to spring. For other examples, see Delen 1963.


80 De Lairesse 1749, vol. 3, p. 261: 'dat de schoonheid en edelzoo van een Stilleven alleen in de allereenvloedige voorwerpen bestaat.' Jezu uitgelezeren, menende daar mede dat men uit alle bloemen de schone en eere moest verkrijgen, gemene en lage uitgroendes; desteyls met de menchen en andere dinghen.'
The term ‘schijnbeeld’ is applied to a trompe l’œil still life in an Amsterdam sale catalogue of 13 April 1800 (lot 156, by W. van der Burg) and in §2 M van Mook’s Nieuwe dictionarium fregiicor- 
hollandiæ (1824), p. 313, ‘bedriegertje’ is a translation of trompe l’œil. Burtsch 1969, p. 3, noted that no archival sources could be found for the term ‘sogen- 
bedriegertje.’ ‘Bedriegertje’ occurs in the collection of still life art described by Brie, which may be similar to fig. 22. The term ‘schijnbeeld,’ like ‘droïlisme,’ is sometimes used to describe the pre- 
sumably humorous genre paintings of Cornelis Bega, Jan Miense Molenaer, and others; see Getty 1906, nos. 701, 
735, 880; van Nijmegen 1924, nos. 124, 125. Peets 1980, vol. 4, p. 26, also p. 18 and 
fig. 38. (Peets does not give an artist of the perspectives). Although van 
Hoochstraten describes having dinner with Povey, he does not say Povey was a 
painter (van Hoochstraten 1867, p. 188; 
1664) saw a perspective he saw at 
Povey’s house was ‘by Screveer,’ which is confusing since that could mean 
Hoochstraten or Robert Streater 
(1624–?1668) an English still-life painter 
described as a painter of ‘perspectives’. However, the two paintings by van 
Hoochstraten at Dyham Park (Brauwen 1988, p. 89) came from Thomas 
Povey since William Blair bought, owned by 
Dyham Park, was a nephew of Povey, and bought 111 works from 
Povey in 1693 (J. Kerworth-Brown, Dyham Park, Glasconcerte 1990, 
pp. 57–58, there is also a list in the 
Glascowhire Record Office). The large inscription perspective at 
Dyham Park is dated 1661, which 
makes it likely to be the painting been 
seen by Brie in January 1664 since 
Hoochstraten arrived in London in 
May 1662. 


...
In a survey of common terms for still lifes (restricting the percentage of the surveyed inventory) it is clear that the vast majority of terms are from a small group of associated terms: 'banquet,' 'banqueten,' 'banqueten,' and 'feytage.' In Flanders after 1515, but related terms in England and around 1600, the term 'banquet' declines in frequency as 'stillife' increases. Somewhat surprisingly, the word 'vanitas' becomes more frequent here in the century. Toward 1600, constructions such as 'feytage' and 'vanitaschilderij' become more common. Moderately frequent are still lifes with 'vases' (as well as oxpeckers and shellfish) as well as 'vases' (and other vessels). Very rare are descriptions of paintings with tobacco, books, and shells. In Antwerp the word 'vellen' is almost entirely absent, while 'vanitas' and 'vase' are also less frequent. Unsurprisingly, 'kruimels' (flower petals) are much more common in Flanders.

References to marbles, kistbaren, and animals (unless specifically described as dead) were not surveyed since there was no sure way to distinguish still lifes from other types of painting; there is also an absence of any consistent terminology for game pieces. It should also be noted that 'banquet' could also refer to scenes such as the banquet of the gods or the banquet of Belshazzar; obvious mentions of this were omitted (as was 'maelstroem'), but no doubt most examples included in this survey referred to figural scenes. Similarly, some vanitas paintings probably included other types of allegories.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>1600-1624</th>
<th>1635-1649</th>
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TOTAL IN SURVEY: 313 | 863 | 811 | 566
106 | 691 | 1210

Shown as a percentage of still life surveyed, inventories from Holland are in bold, those from Antwerp are in roman below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, * indicates the term did not occur, - indicates that it constituted less than 0.5 percent. Because there is insufficient documentation, Dutch inventories were not surveyed for 1600-1624 and Flemish inventories were not surveyed for 1675-1725.
Sources: Bredius 1915, Duveiger 1808, Duveiger 1844, Getty 1996 (and the Provenance Index database), Scuetti, van der Meulen 1979, and other archival sources.