

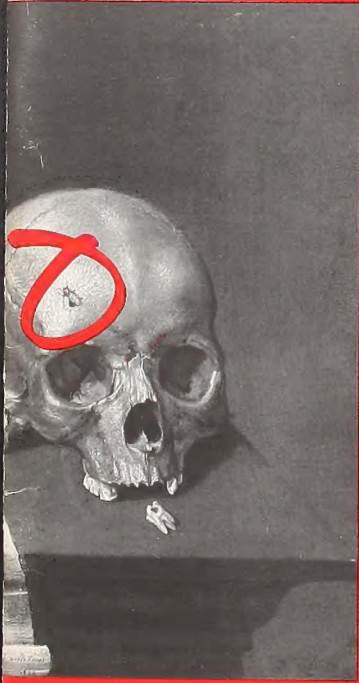
Alfred Bader

Alfred Bader Fine Arts.

[Navarism and Metaphor: The Baroque Still life -  
The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee]

1985

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## Naturalism and Metaphor: The Baroque Still Life

This exhibition was in every sense a *learning experience*. Gratitude and acknowledgements are extended to all those whose assistance proved invaluable: Professors Barry Wind and Jeffrey Hayes for academic guidance; the people at the University Art Museum for professional expertise—Suzanne Foley (Director), Mark Chepp (Curator), Angela Jacobi (Registrar); and special appreciation to the lenders whose cooperation was responsible for allowing the initial idea to become reality.

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G.S.

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Catalogue essay and entries written by Gretchen Schweiss as partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts Degree, Department of Art History, The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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# Naturalism and Metaphor: The Baroque Still Life

September 22-October 20, 1985  
University Art Museum  
The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

"Still life" is an inclusive term that refers to a variety of disparate images. Paintings of flowers, fruit, game, table settings, and ornate objects are all placed within this category. Ingvar Bergström defines the term "still life" very simply as a "representation of objects which lack the ability to move and which are for artistic purposes grouped into a composition."<sup>4</sup> The term originates from the Dutch *Stilleven* which is first found in inventories dating from the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> The French *nature morte* and the Italian *natura in posto* are similar terms free of connotative associations. Unlike mythological or historical subjects, these images are not produced from the imagination, but are painted in a studio where the composition can be carefully arranged and studied. Thus the degree of naturalism displayed in the work is a result of the artist's ability to observe the objects directly.

In her recent discussion of seventeenth century Dutch art, Susanna Alpers includes still life paintings among examples which support her thesis that Dutch art was descriptive and that the artist was fascinated primarily with such pictorial concerns as texture, color, and light.<sup>6</sup> Alpers views still life paintings as images which demonstrate a "microscopic taste for displaying multiple surfaces."<sup>7</sup> A case in point is a still life by Willem Claesz. Heda.<sup>8</sup> The partially peeled lemon, given prominence in the center of the composition, offers the artist a chance to explore a greater variety of textures and tonalities than an unpeeled one would. Likewise, the oyster displayed on a plate is not depicted closed, but is split to reveal a delicately colored, fleshy interior. Many other Dutch still life includes objects such as pies and breads which are cut into or broken apart and Alpers explains that this is part of "the common Dutch practice of opening, in order to reveal to our sight the makings of the objects... we are offered the inside or underside as well as the outer view."<sup>9</sup> Alpers notes Abraham van der Schooten's *Vinotto* painting of skulls to argue that it was common for Dutch artists to present an object from many different angles. This practice of presenting various views and surfaces to the viewer is found not only in Dutch examples, however. A painting of the same subject, attributed to the Italian artist Giovanni Battista Crespi, may be said to display a similar concern.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, lemons with twisting

ribs and opened oysters appear frequently in Dutch paintings and may simply represent certain artistic preferences or conventions which were popular at the time; or they may, in fact, reflect covert meaning.<sup>11</sup>

Alpers is quite correct in applauding Dutch artists' skill in describing objects. However, attention to naturalistic detail and pictorial concern is not limited to Dutch art, but is characteristic of seventeenth century still life painting in general. The early game pieces, for example, display such a degree of realism that they may be seen as illusionistic images of quarry displayed hanging on walls or ledges.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Caravaggio's rendering of objects in his *Basket of Fruit* (Ambrosiana) is so naturalistic that it too may be considered trompe l'oeil, ultimately relating to antique il-

**"Alpers views still life paintings as simple mirrors of nature... Yet the concepts of naturalism and metaphor are not mutually exclusive."**

lusionistic wall painting.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, all of the paintings included in this exhibition demonstrate a similar concern for naturalistic color and detail. For example, the still life with *Ostronal Bag*, by a follower of Francesco Ferruccio (called Il Maltese, c. 1610-1660) displays a variety of textures from the plush carpet to the gleaming metal vessels. The artist carefully recorded the intricate details of the metalwork and the play of light upon the glass vessels. The *Floral Still Life* attributed to the French artist Nicholas Baudesson (1611-1680) displays a similar commitment to naturalistic observation. One may say that this artist also was intent on "describing" with his brush the subtle tonal variances found in the delicate petals and the fluid line of the stems of the flowers in his composition. The fine quality of this painting attests to the artist's skill in "recording" the image on canvas. Alpers makes an effort to create a clear distinction between Northern and Italian art by claiming that the latter is largely narrative. Yet, these two paintings cannot be viewed as being either more narrative or less descriptive than their Dutch counterparts. Furthermore, since many Dutch artists visited Italy—notably

Dirk Valkenburg, whose fine game piece is on exhibition—the lines between Northern and Southern pictorial cultures are necessarily blurred.

Alpers views still life paintings as simple mirrors of nature. If any of these images include additional iconographic content, she claims it was clearly of secondary importance. Yet, the concepts of naturalism and metaphor are not mutually exclusive. The writings of seventeenth century art theorists instruct the artist to always look to nature, but also to embellish it with narrative content. To be sure, these theorists are reticent concerning an emblematic or metaphoric content in still life imagery. Such paintings were subordinate to the histories which were favored by theorists since they allowed the artist to re-do nature according to the Ideal. The French art theorist André Félibien wrote, "Il se voit de ces sortes d'ouvrages de toutes les grandeurs, où des Femmes, comme ont représenté des histoires entières, pour conserver davantage par la durée de la matière la beauté et l'éclat de leurs desseins."<sup>14</sup> Yet, traces can be found in theoretical writings which suggest that content and naturalistic observation are interdependent in the period.

The Dutch theorist Samuel van Hoogstraeten (1627-1678) wrote of embellishing nature with allegory—advising the artist to "respond on the subject in disguised ways."<sup>15</sup> Hoogstraeten's words may apply to still life artists as well as to painters of landscape, genre, and portraiture.

Carel van Mander (1548-1606), an earlier Dutch art theorist, discussed landscape painting and advised the artist to diligently observe and record the details of nature: "You must seek to portray with colors snow, hail, rainfall, frost, rime, steaming and dreary fogs, all the things that are necessary to depict melancholy winter days."<sup>16</sup> He concluded that it is important to "learn your story... so as to arrange your landscape in accordance with it."<sup>17</sup> Van Mander's words may have influenced Peter Paul Rubens, since Lisa Vergara has now shown that his landscapes may be read in connection with the idea of "di pictura poesis."<sup>18</sup>

Many seventeenth century genre scenes also can be interpreted metaphorically. By referring to prints with

explanatory inscriptions, E. de Jongh has demonstrated that many simple genre scene paintings contained double meanings. De Jongh found that the artist conformed to the "seventeenth century rule of the equivocal, which liked to read a representation on two levels, and find the quintessence of its meaning at the second."<sup>19</sup>

Baroque portraiture also often included symbolic content. Many of Frans Hals' portraits contained symbols which allude to characteristics of the sitter.<sup>20</sup> Van Mander himself maintained that the best artists produced works "yt den geest" (from the imagination) and it was "the artist's duty to improve upon nature according to the idea he has formed in his imagination of perfected nature."<sup>21</sup>

It is fair to assume that still life, like landscape, genre, and portrait painting, followed similar precepts. The point of departure was always nature, but story, allegory, and "yt den geest" afforded significant enrichment. Several scholars have attempted to identify symbolic content in still life imagery by isolating certain elements in compositions and interpreting them according to contemporary poems, riddles, and emblems. Ingvar Bergström has looked to these sources in order to arrive meaning to certain elements in numerous *vanitas* still life paintings. For example, the pipe and tobacco, often found in "breakfast" pieces by Pieter Claesz, may allude to the negative view of smoking in the seventeenth century. This is shown in Roemer Visscher's emblem of 1614

**"Several scholars have attempted to identify symbolic content in still life imagery by isolating certain elements in the compositions and interpreting them according to contemporary poems, riddles, and emblems."**

which condemns the "newly acquired vice" by illustrating a man smoking accompanied by an inscription which reads, "there is often something new, but it is seldom any good."<sup>22</sup>

Objects such as candles and timepieces were long associated with transience and often appeared in combination with skulls to signify the ephemerality of earthly life. Clear *vanitas* images such as the one on exhibit by Otto Gutfeldt, which includes all of the above elements, functioned as literal reminders that death is a certainty and time is fleeting. The majority of these particular moralizing images seem to have originated around 1620 from the town of Leyden, then the center of Dutch Calvinism.<sup>25</sup> Such *vanitas* paintings seem to objectify the Calvinist condemnation of worldly possessions and underscore the frailty of earthly existence. These images echo a strict religious morality.<sup>26</sup>

The message of transience also may be conveyed in an image as outwardly beautiful as a floral still life. Bergstrom supports such an interpretation by referring to the Bible. The passage in Psalms (ciii. 15-16) states, "As for man his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it and it is gone."<sup>27</sup> Flowers often appear in combination with other traditional symbols of transience, such as timepieces or skulls.<sup>28</sup> Although the *Floral Still Life* attributed to Barendsson is free of such elements, it still may have evoked similar associations in the seventeenth century viewer, since the perfection of the blossoms depicted in the painting would be recognized to be short-lived. In fact, one pink rose has already lost its petals. It is also possible that this beautiful image reflects a change in patronage signified by a preference in the latter half of the century for more purely decorative paintings.

In his study of the Dutch art market in Delft, J. M. Montias found that the subject matter of the works in Dutch collections underwent a change during the course of the seventeenth century. He identified a "gradual yet profound shift" away from allegorical and mythological "histories" toward more secular landscapes during the second half of the century. Likewise, still life images shift increasingly from the moralizing *vanitas* compositions to more decorative, overtly secular paintings or ornate displays such as those by Willem Kalf.<sup>29</sup> Barend van der Meer's painting on exhibit exemplifies this type of composition which incorporates costly or exotic elements such as the nautilus cup. The wealthy upper third of the

population that comprised the bulk of the Dutch art buying market seemed to favor more decorative compositions. Montias feels that this parallels a general trend of secularization which occurred following the years of religious turmoil.

Scott Sullivan's investigation of the popularity of the Dutch game piece shows a similar evolution. Around the middle of the century, simple illusionistic displays of game were replaced by more colorful, elaborate compositions of exotic quarry often set in romantic

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**"We must know in the first place what constitutes a good still life piece since though it be naturally handled, nothing but a good choice can charm the senses..."**

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landscapes.<sup>30</sup> Because hunting was largely restricted to members of the nobility, the popularity of these images may have resulted from the wealthy patron's desire to own a canvas that would artificially elevate his social status.<sup>31</sup> Thus, a painting such as Valkenburg's may represent an actual hunting trophy which would otherwise have been unattainable.

The decorative quality of still life images produced during the second half of the seventeenth century is evident in French and Italian examples as well. The Italian popular art market was comprised of wealthy individual collectors and a number of old, established families.<sup>32</sup> The paintings in these collections show a preference for more elaborate subjects and presentations. For example, the Colonna Collection in Rome includes many landscapes by Daghet and Claude. The collection also includes large ornate mirrors embellished with grand painted floral displays by the artist Mario Nuzzi (called Mario dei Fiori).<sup>33</sup> The fine *Still Life with Oriental Rug* (Bishop Collection), composed of expensive and exotic objects is in accord with such taste.

French academic theory, which praised pretty decorative images, had an impact on both Italian and Dutch painting styles. Gerard de Laeissse, a Dutch

painter-theorist whose writings echoed French ideas, generally disapproved of game pieces because they did not conform to the intellectual and decorative format preferred by academicians. Nevertheless, he felt that images with "wild boars, stags, hares, pheasants, partridges and other fowls, depending on the princes and noblemen's fancies are more tolerable."<sup>34</sup> Expanding on the type of images that were preferred, De Laeissse stated, "We must know in the first place what constitutes a good still life piece since though it be naturally handled, nothing but a good choice can charm the senses... It is weakness to think that faded flowers should please... or who would have a piece of ordinary snipe or rotten fruit in his best room?"<sup>35</sup> De Laeissse's opinions reflected late seventeenth century classicizing taste which disapproved of images that were too naturalistic.<sup>36</sup>

A painting's placement within the dwelling seems to have been dictated by subject matter. Displays of meals or fruits and vegetables were probably hung in the dining room.<sup>37</sup> Paintings of fruit and food by the eighteenth century artist Luis Melendez were commissioned to decorate the dining room of the royal palace in Spain.<sup>38</sup>

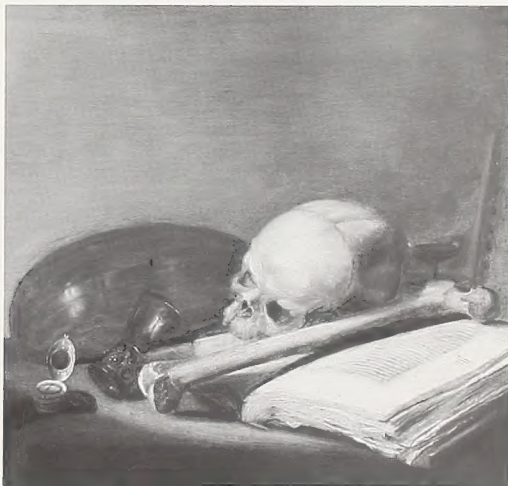
Without a doubt, the art of this period is complex, both visually and iconographically. This is demonstrated by the fine still life paintings included in the exhibition which display a consistently high degree of naturalism, rich color, complex compositions, and provide a challenge to interpret their imagery. As we have seen, naturalism and metaphor were not mutually exclusive concepts in the seventeenth century. The complexity of history paintings, genre scenes, and even portraits and landscapes allowed for a reading on several levels. Still life paintings also can be included. Alper's discussion of still life images as simple "mirrors of nature" is not convincing given a painting such as the *Vanitas* by Gutfeldt in which content clearly plays a dominant role, yet is also naturalistically rendered. Even in less obviously metaphorical images—Valkenburg's game piece or the presumed Hondinger still life with Bernini's bust of Francis d'Este, for example—content and symbolism seem to be conflated with naturalistic representation. In an age that revelled in the conceit of *l'art pictura peeu*, it is difficult not to read paintings.

Gröthen Schweiss

## Notes

- 1 I. Bergström, *Dutch Still Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, New York, 1956, 3.
- 2 Bergström, *Dutch Still Life Painting*, 4.
- 3 S. Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1983, xxv.
- 4 Alpers, *Art of Describing*, 90.
- 5 Alpers, fig. 51. W. C. Heida, *Still Life*, 1634, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam.
- 6 Alpers, 90-91.
- 7 E. de Jongh, "Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing*," book review, *Simiolus*, 14, 1984, 55-56.
- 8 On the suggested symbolic associations of peeling fruit, see B. Wind, "Vincenzo Campi and Hans Fugger: A Peep at Late Cinquecento Bawdy Humor," *Arte Lombarda*, 47-48, 1977, 113.
- 9 For an example of this early type of illusionistic game piece, see I. Bergström, *Dutch Still Life Painting*, fig. 211, which illustrates a work by Barend van der Meer in a private collection in Göttingen.
- 10 C. Sterling, *Still Life Painting from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*, 2nd revised ed., New York, 1981, 81.
- 11 A. Félibien, *Des Principes de L'Architecture, de la Peinture, et des Autres Arts qui en dependent*, Paris, 1699, reprinted by Gregg Press, Ltd., England, 1966, 315.
- 12 S. van Hoogstraeten, *Inleiding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst*, Rotterdam, 1678, cited by B. Wind, "Close Encounters of the Baroque Kind: Amatory Painting by Terbrugghen, Baburen, and La Tour," *Studies in Iconography*, 4, 1978, 115.
- 13 C. van Mander, "On Landscape Painting," reprinted in *The Renaissance Reader*, J. Bruce Ross, ed., New York, 1953, 549.
- 14 Van Mander, 552.
- 15 L. Vergara, *Rubens and the Poetics of Landscape*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1982, 21-24.
- 16 E. de Jongh, "Eroten in Vogelerspectief," *Simiolus*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1968-1969, 72.
- 17 S. Slive, *Frans Hals*, v. 1, New York, 1970, 19-21. For example, the author discusses motifs found on the costume of Hals' *Laughing Cavalier* of 1624.
- 18 Slive, 14.
- 19 I. Bergström, *Dutch Still Life Painting*, 156-57, fig. 134a.
- 20 Bergström, 158.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Bergström, 155.
- 23 See for example, a work on panel by Jacques de Gheue in the Museum de Lakenhal, Leyden, in which several roses rest atop a skull. A pipe, a spent candle, and a watch also appear in the painting, Bergström, 176, fig. 150.
- 24 J. M. Montias, *Artists and Artisans in Delft*, Princeton, 1982, 270.
- 25 S. Sullivan, *The Dutch Game Piece*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1978, 134-36.
- 26 Sullivan, 136.
- 27 F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980, 154-56; 209-10.
- 28 J. Spike, *Italian Still Life Painting from Three Centuries*, National Academy of Design, New York, 1983, 16, pl.4.
- 29 G. de Lairese, *The Art of Painting*, translated by J. F. Fritsch, London, 1778, 421.
- 30 De Lairese, 421.
- 31 Cf. A. Félibien, *Des Principes de L'Architecture*, Paris, 1699, Preface, §2, §3. On attitudes toward nature in art theory, cf. B. Wind, "Naturalism, Decorum, and the Bel Idea in 17th-Century Spain and Italy," *Alaryus*, 13, 1966-1967, 8-17.
- 32 For example, it is known that Vincenzo Campi produced five large canvases depicting vendors in marketplaces for placement in the dining room of Hans Fugger's residence at Schloss Kirchheim. B. Wind, *Arte Lombarda*, 1977, 108.
- 33 Sterling, *Still Life Painting*, 114. The concert has survived into our own day as any visitor to the dining room at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich knows.
- 34 Cited by A. Gasten, "Dutch Still Life Painting: Judgements and Appreciation," in *Still Life in the Age of Rembrandt*, Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand, 1982, 13.

## Catalogue



### Anonymous

- *Vanitas*, c. 1630

oil on panel  
13 3/4" x 14 3/4"  
Lent Anonymously

Provenance:  
Private Collection, Milwaukee  
Shapiro Collection, London

The prominently placed skull and bone in this painting clearly identify it as a *vanitas* image. Other elements commonly found in this type of still life are also present in the Milwaukee painting. A timepiece, a symbol of passing time, appears in the foreground. In the background, the rounded back of a lute is visible. A glass known as a Roemer rests against the skull. The bone and skull are placed on top of an open book, a common motif which symbolizes the vanity of knowledge and learning (cf. Bergström, 1956, 154-155). Barely visible in the far right is a type of lamp called a "vuur-test".

This small intimate composition is painted in monochrome tones of greens, browns and golds. The arrangement of objects has been carefully controlled and the placement of the skull, bone, and book create strong parallel diagonals. The softly modelled skull is more accomplished in handling than the lute which appears rather two-dimensional. The perspective of the Roemer is somewhat awkward and the timepiece lacks definition. The technique used to render the pages of the book, however, is quite painterly. Both the composition and elements of the painting on exhibit closely correspond to a painting once attributed to Rembrandt and now rejected (cf. H. Gerson, 1969, XIII). Bergström gives this description: "The composition is simple - a skull leans against a thighbone lying on an open folio; to the left are a watch and a Roemer, and in the background a lute and an oil lamp. The whole is lit by a soft dim light" (Bergström, 1956, 162; the painting is reproduced in *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, 13, 1934, fig. 4, 7). However, this type of *vanitas* is not unique to the Rembrandt school. The central motif of the skull, bone, and book seen in the *Vanitas* on exhibit is a common one. A similar collection of elements can be found in a painting by Pieter Claesz dated 1630 now in Sweden (Bergström, 1956, 167, fig. 141). The Milwaukee painting also approximates Claesz's work in tonality.

Compositionally and iconographically, the Milwaukee *Vanitas* is closely related to paintings produced by various artists working in and around the city of Leyden during the third decade of the seventeenth century. Similar elements are chosen: books, globes, musical instruments, watches, candles, oil lamps. Bergström identifies these as symbols of transience (Bergström, 1956, 172). The compositions of these

paintings are characterized by a "monochrome" palette and a "picturesque disorder," but as in the Milwaukee painting, are subject to the control of a firm diagonal and imposed balance of objects. The monochrome tonality of the painting on exhibit seems to indicate that it would date from the third decade as well.





**Jan de Corduba**

- *Vanitas*, 1667

oil on canvas

22" x 27"

Lent by Dr. Alfred Bader

Provenance:

Bader Collection, Milwaukee

Han Jongeling, Collection, The Hague

This vanitas image is signed and dated by the artist, Jan de Corduba (also Johan de Corbui). Very little is known about the artist except his place of birth—Brussels—and that he was active in Vienna between 1663 and 1702. Noëmi Voskuil-Popper, who has recently written an article on this artist (*Gazette de Beaux-Arts*, 97, 1976, 61-74), discusses eight vanitas paintings by his hand. The author, on the basis of a statement by Sandrart which identifies De Corduba as a still life artist during his early career and later as a painter of other subjects, dates all of the vanitas images to the period prior to 1675 (Voskuil-Popper, 1976, 61). The painting on exhibit is clearly dated 1667 and is stylistically related to De Corduba's other vanitas images.

De Corduba's painting contains many objects commonly found in vanitas images. Musical instruments (a violin and flute), books (an almanac and music book), playing cards, a watch, globe, hourglass, and a skull, all appear in this tightly arranged composition. The background of the painting is consumed by an inky darkness and a single flame burns in a lamp which is suspended from the upper left corner of the canvas. In this carefully controlled composition, the objects are grouped together to form a triangular unit bounded on the left by the diagonal placement of the violin. The placement of the rounded shapes of the watch in the foreground, the skull and globe, create another diagonal line (paralleling that formed by the violin). The suspended lamp creates an effective counterbalance to the composition and fills what otherwise would be an empty portion of the canvas.

Voskuil-Popper interprets this vanitas painting as a representation of "two different spheres: music and time...arranged around death as a central theme." (Voskuil-Popper, 1976, 64). The watch and hourglass are both literal symbols of the passage of time and the almanac, which prominently displays dates of the old and new year (left page—December, right page—January) is also interpreted as symbolic time's passing (Voskuil-Popper, 1976, 64). The author goes so far as to suggest that the page identified as January is painted "half illuminated, half in shade." In this way it represents "the unknown future, the destiny of man on earth which is partly sunny and partly passed in darkness." (*Ibid.*) The page identified as January bears a saying in German about keeping warm, being cheerful, and receiving warm greetings. The juxtapo-

sition of this saying with the skull directly behind it clearly expresses the message of the transience of these human pleasures.

The violin, already discussed as an important compositional element, also has symbolic importance. Bergström identifies musical instruments in vanitas images as "warnings against a lazy and sinful life." (Bergström, 1956, 156) He cites, the aphorism of the Dutch poet Jan van der Veer: "DE VEDEL of FI-OOL die wert God betert, meer Gebruyck tot ydel-heit, als tot doctis lof en eer." (The fiddle or violin is alas used more in the service of vanity than in the praise and glory of God.) (Bergström, 1956, 165) The falo of music bears the words *Alemanade* and *Kourante* which refer to popular dances of that time. Bergström also identifies playing cards and dice in terms of the negative connotations associated with these pastimes. To support this interpretation, he illustrates an emblem by Roemer Visscher (*Sinnespoppen*, 4th ed., 1678) entitled "Pessima placent pluribus" (The worst things please the most people) in which these gambling requisites are found. (Bergström, 1956, 157, fig. 134d.) Voskuil-Popper interprets the cards differently, seeing them instead as symbols of fortune or fate, which the author claims, "is an allegory of the destiny of man." (Voskuil-Popper, 1976, 64). The ultimate destiny of man is further expressed by the combination of hearts and spades. Red hearts—symbolic of life—top the deck while black spades—symbolic of death—tip out from underneath. In either case, the cards support the moralizing vanitas message clearly conveyed by De Corduba's painting.



**Otto Guthfeldt**

- *Vanitas*, 1655

oil on panel  
19" x 15½"  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Gary Bishop

Provenance:  
Bishop Collection, Greenfield, Wisconsin  
Bader Collection, Milwaukee

This small vanitas image of a skull, candlestick, scroll, and timepiece bears the signature of an artist about whom almost nothing is known. The only existing reference to him appears in the "Alphabetical List of Dutch and Flemish Still-Life Painters of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in the Ashmolean Museum's *Catalogue of the Collection of Dutch and Flemish Still Life Pictures Bequeathed by Daisy Linda Ward* (Oxford, 1950, 209).

This type of literal vanitas image done in dark, monochrome tones is closely related to those produced around 1620 in Leyden (Bergström, 1956, 158).

The university town—a "stronghold of Dutch Calvinism"—provided the perfect atmosphere for the production of such moralizing images that functioned as literal reminders of one's ultimate fate. Bergström traces the origins of these images to "related motifs" in sixteenth century representations of St. Jerome (*Ibid.*).

Guthfeldt has included elements from what Bergström identifies as the "second group" of vanitas compositions—symbols representing the transience of human life (Bergström, 1956, 154). He notes that "the message of the painting is frequently stressed by the inclusion of a Latin phrase: 'Vanitas, vanitas vanitatis, non omnia veniunt.'" (*Ibid.*) In the Guthfeldt painting, words such as "tulip" and "hour" appear on the scroll and clearly supplement the vanitas image. Numerous elements serve as literal symbols of transience. The short candle signifies the passage of time, an image that can be seen, for example, in a still life by Alexander Goosemans in Brussels (Bergström, "Disguised Symbolism," II, 1955, fig. 20). The timepiece carries a similar message. The fly, which appears on the forehead of the skull, is a literal symbol of decomposition originating in German portraits of the second half of the fifteenth century. On the front of these paintings appeared the images of newly married couples and on the backs were their *Hautskeletten*, eaten by snakes, flies and other insects (Bergström, "Disguised Symbolism," II, 1955, 345). The tooth, which is detached from the skull and bears remnants of blood, is quite unusual. It may relate to a poem by Jacob Cats entitled "On an Extracted Tooth" (reprinted and translated by R. Judson, 1959, 81-82). The poem is a vanitas narrative, clearly expressed by the following lines:

O tooth! thou were my own limb  
Part of this my sick constitution  
Yes as my own comrade  
But see now art thou but alone,  
A dirty, hollow and paltry thing,  
That is neither moving nor living  
Because death has embraced you  
How near I, myself, am to the boat  
of Charon  
And when a part goes before  
How can the whole exist much  
longer.

The date of 1655 is relatively late for this kind of simplistic vanitas image, since most paintings of this type were produced between 1620 and 1630. Indeed, what we probably have is the work of a provincial, minor artist still working in archaic modes. The technical problems, such as the awkward use of perspective reinforce this assumption.



**Cornelis Norbertus Gysbrechts**

- *Vanitas*, c. 1660

Oil on canvas  
 100 x 120 cm  
 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Provenance:  
 Hans G. Bredius, M.A., 1911  
 Kunsthandel, Amsterdam, 1912

**C**ornelis Norbertus Gysbrechts (1615–1683), the present owner as the artist of this vanitas image is unfortunately little known about his art. It is possible that he was a student of the Guild of St. Luke in Amsterdam in 1659 and 1660 and academically trained. He received payment for his services as a court painter in Copenhagen in 1660 and 1672 (De Jongh 1982: 207). Gysbrechts, who painted many types of subject matter, was especially appreciated for his portraits of important figures (for example, *Portrait of Frederick III, the Netherlands*, De Jongh 1982: 133–34, 35). The artist also painted several vanitas still lifes which display an extreme realism in their depiction of objects (for example, *Vanitas*, 2013, cat. no. 11).

The most striking vanitas still life by Gysbrechts is *Vanitas* (1660), which is reproduced in this book. As depicted. As an acclaimed trompe l'oeil artist, Gysbrechts painted in a style that was highly realistic, allowing him to achieve the desired deception of the viewer.

The objects in this vanitas still life do not appear fully three-dimensional. Most of the objects are placed very close to the picture plane and appear to protrude into the viewer's space. This type of compositional arrangement emphasizes a still life in which an artist's palette is placed in the foreground (present location unknown, reproduced in Vega, 1981, pl. 134). The red colors, which add a special vibrancy, further enhance the realistic appearance of the work on exhibit.

The prominence of the skull in this vanitas still life is a vanitas image. The "death's head" placed prominently in the foreground is entwined with laurel—traditionally symbolizing fame—who, as a mortal being, is subject to worldly vanities. Many of the other objects also found in traditional vanitas images, items such as the globe, hourglass, and extinguished candle are commonly found in paintings which convey the message of transience (Bergstrom 1956:174–55). Gambling stones, dice, and playing cards—are also frequent inclusions representing transience in the still life. Two important paintings are the Jewish prayer shawl and book of Hebrew writings. Books, commonly included in these

images to allude to vanity and pride in learning (Bergstrom 1956: 156) are generally non-specific in subject and language. It is unfortunate that the Hebrew writing is unrecognizable, for it would provide a valuable clue in deciphering the painting's content. One may assume, given the rarity of such elements in vanitas images, that the Jewish shawl and book are personal references to the patron who commissioned this painting, although no information about this patron has come to light.



**Cornelis de Heem**

• *Floral Bouquet*

Oil on canvas  
26 1/2" x 22"  
Lent by Dr. Alfred Bader

Provenance:  
Bader Collection, Milwaukee  
Bert Poso Collection, New Orleans  
Mannheim Galleries

The floral still life attributed to Cornelis de Heem includes many of the conventions found in the works of his father, Jan Davidz, de Heem. A comparison with the elder De Heem's painting *Still Life with Fruit* (Amsterdam, 1655) shows a similar, but more detailed composition. In de Heem's work, the artist depicts the elaborate bouquets from a more elevated position in front of architectural niches. In both compositions, one finds a variety of small insects and an assortment of fruits and flowers. These conventions are followed in varying degrees in other still life works by De Heem, such as *Still Life with Fruit* (1660) and *Still Life with Fruit* (1665). The apparent simplicity of the work of Cornelis is characterized by a greater clarity of elements and thus lacks some of the clarity and force of his father's painting. In general, the work of De Heem is more restrained and more formal in composition than that of his father. The colors are cooler and brighter, and the brushwork is more refined, with a greater use of light and shadow, which differ from the rich, warm tones used by his father. This is amply evidenced by the painting's color palette.

Many of the particular elements of these hanging bouquets have been interpreted in terms of vanitas. Albert Veer, in *The Still Life in the Dutch Golden Age* (1981), notes that the inclusion of insects in still life paintings, such as those by De Heem, is a symbol of the process of decay. Opened pomelo slices, also present in the painting, are another symbol of decay. The apples, which are blemished, indicate that they too are beginning to decompose. Likewise, the inclusion of insects often suggested the process of decomposition (Bergstrom, *Disguised Symbolism?*, II, 1955, 346). And Ben Sturton, in *The Still Life in the Dutch Golden Age* (1981), notes that the inclusion of insects in still life paintings were symbols for the passion of Christ. In *The Still Life in the Dutch Golden Age* (1981), Sturton notes that the small butterflies that appear in the upper right corner of the canvas are often found in Dutch art and symbolized the transience of earthly life (Wells, 1979, 61). The small butterflies that appear in the upper right corner of the canvas are often found in Dutch art and symbolized the transience of earthly life (Wells, 1979, 61). The small butterflies that appear in the upper right corner of the canvas are often found in Dutch art and symbolized the transience of earthly life (Wells, 1979, 61). Thus, De Heem's painting is a classic example of the vanitas genre, which is a symbol of the transience of earthly life and the vanity of earthly pleasures.



(Attributed) Nicholas Baudesson  
 • *Floral Still Life*

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Leant in the Palace of the Fine Arts, Hagerty Museum of Art, Marquette, Michigan

Palace of the Fine Arts, Hagerty Museum of Art,  
 Marquette, Michigan, Michigan  
 Photo: © Hagerty Museum of Art, Marquette, Michigan

The Marquette *Floral Still Life* bears the signature "Monnoyer" but is not for the museum collection. However, that this name was added later, most likely to increase the value of the work, since Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer was one of the foremost sixteenth-century painters of floral still lifes. Stylistically this still life is more closely related to the work of another French artist, Nicholas Baudesson (c. 1611-1680 Paris) whose work has often been the subject of confusion due in part to the similarity of his to that of François Boucher, a member of an important family of artists (Farr, 1974: 27) was a 17th-century painter who was mentioned by André Felibien in his *Entretien de l'art et des ouvrages de plusieurs grands peintres anciens et modernes* (Paris, 1666-168, v. II, 293, cited by Farr, 1974, note 134). Confusion over the extent of his oeuvre results from the fact that Baudesson signed few of his paintings which stylistically bear some affinity to the work of Monnoyer. One exception, *Flowers in a Crystal Vase* (Private Collection, Farr, 1974: 279) is signed on the back and has been used as a means to identify other work.

A comparison between Baudesson's *Basket of Flowers* (Private Collection, Farr, 1974: 279) and Monnoyer's *Floral Still Life* (Baudesson, 1974: 279) clearly shows that the two artists, yet in spite of certain similarities, differences do exist which distinguish the Marquette still life from the work of Monnoyer. The *Floral Still Life* on exhibition, displays strong chiaroscuro to the extent that the darkness of the background envelops and obscures some of the flowers. In contrast, the same intense light and dark contrasts can be seen in the signed *Flowers in a Crystal Vase* by Baudesson. Monnoyer's paintings typically display more uniform lighting effects. The same is noticeable in the Marquette piece. In contrast, Baudesson in the Marquette *Basket of Flowers* displays similar rich tones of red, forest green, and yellow an offset by cool blue in both paintings. Monnoyer's palette, exemplified by his *Basket of Flowers* for example, is more uniform and does not utilize colors with the intensity of Baudesson's. Also, Baudesson's works show a preference for curving line greater than that found in Monnoyer. In the Marquette still life, the absence of the curving glories offered the artist a change to introduce these lyric lines and curves. Baudesson's painting has a limited painterliness compared to the Marquette area such as the extrusion petals,

hydrangea blooms, and highlights on the bowl. Monnoyer's paintings display a consistent painterly finish.



**(In the manner of) Cornelis  
Biltius**

• *Still Life with Dead Fowl*

oil on canvas  
29" x 24 1/2"  
Lent by the Milwaukee Public Museum

Provenance:  
Milwaukee Public Museum Collection  
Barler Collection Milwaukee

The composition of the Milwaukee painting is a simple one, and the birds rest their bodies on a ledge before the half-arch of an architectural niche. The three birds—one a mallard, the others probably European jays—lie in a row, their bodies parallel to the horizontal line of the ledge. Because of this awkward positioning, it is difficult to tell the color of the black and white bird in the middle. The bird's feet are tucked under its body, and a shadow is cast on the ledge directly in front of it.

Because the fowl in the Milwaukee painting are arranged in a composition that was most likely assembled by a "copying trophic" indeed, this type of composition is long in the tradition of trompe-l'œil game pieces that, like the *Still Life with Dead Fowl*, have been mentioned in the early literature on the subject. The earliest well-documented work is 1504, Albrecht Dürer's *Manuel*, Sterling, 1981, fig. 91. It is also associated stylistically with early Dutch game pieces characterized by small intimate groupings of birds arranged on a shelf, table or ledge before a dark wall. They were generally painted in a more formalized manner, but like the *Still Life with Dead Fowl*, they were often balanced, horizontal, tripartite compositions, the elements in the Milwaukee painting being similar to a central line of birds. The earliest example was (cf. Sullivan, 1978: 80) *Painting of a Dove*, which was largely confined to the first half of the seventeenth century. Some artists continued to work in this manner after this time, but the trend was generally toward more elaborate and decorative compositions. Jacobus Biltius and his son Cornelis were among the few who carried on the traditional format of the early seventeenth-century still life composition.

The Milwaukee painting was unsigned, and both the elder and younger Biltius usually signed their work; however, there is some stylistic affinity to one unsigned work attributed to Cornelis (Klenn, et al. 1980, fig. 137b). A similar stiffness and linearity is seen, for example, in the *Trompe-l'œil of a Mallard*. The awkward positioning of the birds on the ledge is comparable to the work of an artist such as Cornelis Biltius in the *Wild Bird*. *Revue de l'Art*, March 1980, pl. 61. However, the more severe arrangement of birds, Cornelis preferred light backgrounds, and his work is generally considered to be more decorative than that of his father.

Instead, it is only possible to say that the Milwaukee painting is a work of the Biltius family.



**Dirk Valkenberg**

- *Still Life with Dead Rabbit*, c. 1700

Oil on canvas  
 Lent Amsterdam

From the collection of the  
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam  
 Photo: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen  
 Zeyler Collection, Amsterdam

The game piece bears traces of the signature of the Dutch artist Dirk Valkenberg in the lower left corner. Born in Amsterdam in 1677, Valkenberg traveled to Frankfurt and Wandsburg in 1695 or early 1697. In 1706, he traveled to Surman and painted exotic plants and animals found on the plantation of Jonas Wosten. He died in Amsterdam in 1721 (Sullivan, 1984, 101).

The composition of this painting is dominated by a centrally placed dead rabbit. Three small figures appear to the right of the rabbit and two are seated in the foreground. The game is displayed in a formal, open setting, which includes water, visible in the very far ground, a tree trunk and foliage in the left half of the composition, and an open vista to the right. Tones of muted grey blended with tan are the dominant colors. The fur on the belly of the rabbit is white and the remainder of its pelt is done in warm brown tones. A bluish-grey is used to depict the reflections on the water in the foreground. In general, the colors are cooler than those found in the work of his teacher, Jan Weenix (1642-1722) (Bernt, 1983, 103; Valkenberg, 1970). The format of game displayed in a landscape is similar to, but not as decorative as, some Weenix compositions such as a picture of a German private collection, dated 1706 (Klein, et al., 1979, fig. 142, 261). The Valkenberg still life is finely painted, with the softness of fur and feathers delicately rendered. The rabbit's eyes and claws are precisely detailed, as are the blades of grass and the fibers of the rope. A similar precision of detail can be seen in another Valkenberg painting, formerly at the Galerie Hougstieder (reproduced in *Burlington Magazine*, 112, 1970, 633).

The Dutch game piece gained popularity around mid-century. Prior to this time, paintings with game as the part of ordinary or kitchen scenes were simple compositions of a single hare or a few dead birds (Klein, et al., 1979, 103). E. Vonck's game pieces in Gammel (c. 1960, figs. 212-215). Around the middle of the century, however, game pieces began to take on a more decorative appearance created by the use of elaborate elements and colorful compositions set in scenic landscapes. The decades just prior to and immediately following the beginning of the eighteenth century saw a continuation of this decorative style, which Sullivan claims was brought about by French influences (Sullivan, 1977: 193). Gerard de Lairesse,

called the "Dutch Poussin," was a theoretician who is credited with popularizing French ideas as the "North" with his treatise entitled *The Art of Painting*. De Lairesse favored game pieces that depicted exotic quarry and always advised using the most visually pleasing elements (De Lairesse, Eng. trans. J. F. Fritsch, 1778, 421). Weenix's compositions typically illustrate the type of still life imagery De Lairesse advocated. Valkenberg's picture includes the preferred landscape vistas, but his prime emphasis is on the hunting trophy—the trussed and bleeding rabbit.

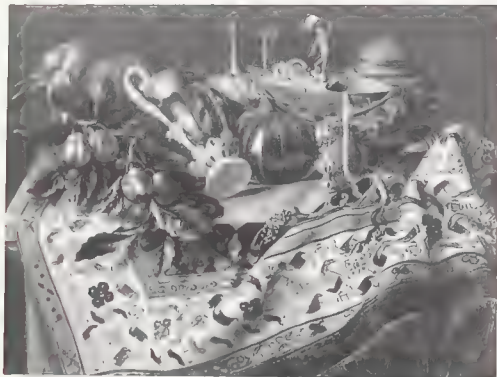
Because of the strict regulations, hunting in the Netherlands was largely the prerogative of the nobility. Documents such as P. Merula's *Placaten ende verordeningen op 't zake van de Wildemissen* (The Hague, 1605, cited by Sullivan, *ibid.*, 111, 1980, 236) specifically restricted even the nobility to one hare or two rabbits per week (Merula, 1605, bk. II, 113-126). Smaller birds, such as those in the Midway Key painting, seemed to be less closely regulated (Sullivan, 1980, 236-37, note 8). Sullivan notes that "by the sixth decade, the game piece began to assume a more trophy-like character" (*ibid.*, 242). He believes that the people of the upper classes who were otherwise restricted from actually hunting purchased images such as these compositions as trophies.











**(Follower of) Francesco Fieravino  
Called Il Maltese (c.1640-1660)**

● *Still Life with Oriental Rug*

Oil on canvas  
20 x 18 in.  
1640-1660, Maltese

Provenance:  
The Earl of Sandwich, 17th century; Worcester  
Hall, 18th century; Maltese;  
Vernon Law, San Francisco;  
Private Collection, California

The attribution of the *Still Life with Oriental Rug* is problematic. Stylistically, the still life composition, still life is superficially related to the work of the Italian Francesco Fieravino (called Il Maltese). Little is known of his career, except that he worked in Rome and is credited with popularizing a style characterized by lavish decorative objects featuring expensive objects. (Spink, 1963, 92) Undoubtedly a somewhat artist, referred to as Il Maltese, style can be seen in the work of other Italian artists such as Cosimmo Recca, Evaristo Baschenis, and Pier Francesco Cottadini (Spink, 1983, cat. nos. 31, 29, 27). Il Maltese's displays of costly elements arranged in a decorative and orderly fashion, however, are Northern European prototypes by artists such as Willem Kalf (cf. Bergstrom, 1956, figs. 216, 232). However, this painting differs from the works of Il Maltese whose compositions are usually less cluttered and more spacious and were less painterly (cf. *The Art of the Marcellus: The Baroque in Italy*, 1984, 61).

The expensive materials in the painting on exhibit only seem to be arranged in a careless and informal manner. An ornate metal ewer rests on its side, a string of pearls dangles from another richly worked vessel, and a rumpled carpet provides the base for all of these objects. These items function as compositional devices that lead the viewer's eye in and around the display in a dramatic baroque fashion. A series of intersecting diagonals enliven the composition and lead the viewer's gaze into the arrangement. The brushstroke is broad and spontaneous in certain areas such as the leaves of the fruit found in the left corner of the table. The artist took great care to reproduce reflections of light on gleaming metal and glass surfaces. The overall lush effect of this still life is enhanced by warm, rich colors such as the dominant red tones.

Extraneous details such as this one have often been interpreted by scholars as warnings against luxury. For example, E. de Jongh cites seventeenth-century theologians who wrote about "the sin of superfluity" (De Jongh, 1992, 82). He also cites Roemer Visscher's emblem of 1614 which criticizes the use of "large silver-gilt dishes, cups, bowls, goblets, basins which do not serve the duty want" ("Ad tragoedias," *Sinne-poppen*, De Jongh, *Ibid.*). Yet it seems incongruous that a still life as visually rich

and pleasing as the one on exhibition—a painting free of overt vanitas objects like skulls or hourglasses—would actually be such an admonition against immoderate living. Indeed, the simple act of purchasing a decorative object like a work of art could be considered an extravagance in itself. Moreover, the artist may be secondary in this ornately beautiful painting.





#### Anonymous Italian

##### • *Fruit Still Life with Dead Game*

Oil on canvas

27 1/2 x 35 1/2 in.

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Gary Bishop

Provenance

Acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1963

Inventory Number: 1963.1.1.1

This still life is primarily composed of fruit, which is arranged in a landscape setting. Most of this wooded landscape, however, has been cropped out and only two tree trunks are visible at the far right of the painting. Hanging from these trees are two dead birds and "some apples" on the tree trunk to the right. The dark chiaroscuro almost totally obscures the foliage that forms the background for the fruit. These are all various types of golden apples, pomegranates, pears, peaches, and plums are carefully rendered and include naturalistic touches such as drops of moisture on their surfaces. The backgrounds are the dominant colors and are effected by rich greens and browns of the landscape and foliage.

The attribution of the work remains moot. The painting does, however, bear some relation to the work of several Italian artists such as Tommaso Salviati (1577-1625). His *Still Life with Fruit and Game* (Salviati Collection, Spike, 1983, pl. 13), includes a basket of apples, game, and vegetables. The rose red cheeks and hard polished surfaces of the apples are similar to the treatment of the fruit in the Greenfield painting. These unblemished apples differ, however, from Salviati's naturally naturalistic ones which are spotted and worm eaten. In general, Salviati's technique is more painterly and his objects are flatter and less organized spatially. The artist of the Greenfield painting used a more controlled brushstroke and a harder line. The inclusion of the snail on the tree trunk, however, does suggest a reference to Salviati who was one of the first artists to represent the "birth and advent life of animals," by including a snail and "mouse in his still life of 1621" (Spike, 1983, cat. no. 13, fig. 16). The combination of dead game and fruit may also relate to the work of the Flemish artist Frans Snyders (1579-1657) who predominantly influenced Italian artists (Spike, 1983, cat. no. 13).

The treatment of the apples in the Greenfield still life also suggests an awareness of the work of the Neapolitan artist, Luca Forte (active, 1625-1655). The almost wooden, enameled surfaces of Forte's fruit in the *Still Life with Fruit*, now in the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota (Spike, 1983, pl. 17) can be related to the treatment of the apples in the painting on exhibition. Forte was the first Neapolitan artist to put up his still life in his studio settings (Spike, 1983, 54). His compositions are characterized by a shallow space. In fact, the la-

ographer Bernardo De Dominicis criticized his works saying, "Very few works by this painter are seen that have items in the foreground and the back." (De Dominicis, 1742, III, 293, cited by Spike, *Ibid.*) The Greenfield painting with its lack of background, like the works of Forte, features a similar planar, stage-like arrangement of objects set in a limited amount of space.

The inclusion of dead birds in this fruit still life may suggest a metaphorical content. An Italian still life depicting various types of dead birds by Giovanni Antonio Castiglione has been identified as a "troupe morte" image (Spike, 1983, pl. 9). Yet, the painting on exhibit differs in that it is primarily a fruit still life. The unobtrusive placement of the dead fowl in this painting may suggest that metaphorical content is secondary.



### Anonymous Italian

#### • *Kitchen Still Life*, c. 1650

oil on canvas

52" x 53"

Lent by William and Sharon Treul

#### Provenance:

Treul Collection, Pewaukee, Wisconsin

Private Collection, Milwaukee

Bader Collection, Milwaukee

Art Market, Detroit

The Pewaukee still life is a kitchen scene which displays a variety of vegetables—turnips, peppers, lettuce—fruit, dead fowl, and kitchen utensils. Barely discernible at the top of the painting are an owl, which is perched on a large metal vessel, and a cat which rests its paws on it. All the objects are arranged along three horizontal ascending levels. The careful ordering makes each level almost autonomous.

Display still life paintings of this type were fairly common in the seventeenth century and ultimately derive from sixteenth century market scenes by artists like Pieter Aertsen (*The Butcher Shop*, Uppsala University, Bergström, 1956, fig. 15), Joachim Beuckelaer (*Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Bergström, 1956, fig. 18), and Vincenzo Campi (*The Fruit Vendor*, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, Spike, 1983, pl. 1). These artists' compositions included great displays of foodstuffs piled up very close to the picture plane. Recently, scholars have identified iconographic content in these works which indicates that these artists intended their compositions to be more than simple scenes of vendors and their wares (K. Moser, 1976, 57-83). Aertsen, for example, includes a biblical scene in the background of his *Butcher Shop*, which combined with the almost vulgar display of meat in the foreground, suggests a negative comment on the carnality of earthly life (cf. Wind, *Art Bulletin*, 1976, 96). Although the Pewaukee painting contains no such overt reference iconographic content may be present if one considers the cat and owl in terms of their negative emblematic associations. In his article about still life which also includes a cat, by the Flemish artist Pieter Boel, Lubomir Konečný has plausibly suggested that the cat is more than an anecdotal inclusion and represents thievery and trickery ("Überlegungen zu einem Stillleben von Pieter Boel," *Extrait de Artibus et historiae*, 1983, 133-35). Further, it has been suggested that the owl—a killer of birds—may be a reference to "memento mori" (*The Art of the Marcellus: The Baroque in Italy*, 1984, 18). Yet, these two live creatures do not assume a prominent position within the composition and perhaps the iconography is secondary to the additive decorative display. Indeed, the cat and owl may be simply "anecdotal additions" (*Ibid.*).

The connection to the work of Pieter Boel may not be coincidental if one looks to Genoa for the origin of the Pewaukee painting. Many Flemish artists includ-

ing Jan Roos and Vincent Malo (Spike, 1983, 100) worked in Genoa. Paintings by Genoese artists Anton Maria Vassallo and Giovanni Agostino Casanova, which often include live animals and are very painterly in technique, reflect this Flemish influence (cf. *Stilleben in Europa*, figs. 222, 227, 228).

The Pewaukee still life, with its expressive and energetic brushstroke and rich color, relates stylistically to the work of these Genoese artists. It differs from them, however, in its careful arrangement and planarity. Such complications hinder a firm attribution for this painting.



(After) David Teniers  
 • Kitchen Scene, c. 1650

oil on canvas mounted on panel  
 24½" x 29½"  
 Lent by William and Sharon Treval

Provenance:  
 Treval Collection, Pewaukee Wisconsin

This painting is a near replica of the *Fat Kitchen*, painted by David Teniers the Younger, dated 1643, now in the Mauritshuis, The Hague (Davidson, 1979, pl. 7). That picture was one of several executed by Teniers during the 40's for important patrons (Davidson, 1979, 5). Because of the popularity of Teniers' paintings, they were frequently copied. More than a dozen artists are known to have worked in the Teniers' manner—hoping to capitalize on the success of the master's genre scenes and drilleres. Some, such as Matheus van Hellemont, did outright copies of his works (for example, *Interior with Flayed Ox*, Stockholm Museum Hallby; Davidson, 1979, 61-62). It is likely that the Pewaukee painting was done by a student. Yet, Teniers, who was himself a successful artist, never took on many pupils. Only the names of three appear in the *Liggeren* of the Antwerp Guild (Davidson, 1979, 55). Lacking records or signatures nothing is known of their work. Still Davidson feels, "it may be that some of the poor-quality seventeenth-century copies of his paintings are the works of these students" (Davidson, 1979, 56). In the absence of documentation of the Teniers' atelier and his copyists, a definitive attribution for this painting cannot be made.

Nearly an exact copy, the Pewaukee painting lacks the clarity and some of the quality of the original. There are weak passages. In the *Fat Kitchen*, the object on the table is an ornate decoration in the form of the usans. In the Pewaukee picture it is unrecognizable. The figures, however, are carefully modelled. The woman's face, for example, is delicately colored and detailed. The overall tonality of the Pewaukee painting differs from the original which was painted on copper.

This genre scene of a kitchen interior, which includes an abundance of foodstuffs—fish in the foreground, fowl suspended overhead, roasting meat in the background—may illustrate the vice of gluttony.

Figures busy themselves preparing a large quantity of food for what could only be a great banquet. The theme of the corruption of youth may also be implied by the central placement of the woman peeling an apple and the child who waits to receive it. Apples, which also appear at the woman's feet, are associated with the fall of man. The child's acceptance of the apple suggests that he too will be vulnerable to sin and temptation. It also recalls the popular Dutch expres-

sion, "one rotten apple spoils the whole basket." (cf. Welu, 1979, 92; I am indebted to Professor Wind for calling my attention to this reference.)

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Cover Illustration

Ohio-Guthrie, Boston, 1882.  
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Gary Bishop,  
Greenfield, Wisconsin.