

During the Dutch Golden Age of the 17th century, the Low Countries became world leaders in international trade. The wild profits of the Dutch trade are lusciously represented in the still-life paintings of the time, but their alluring surfaces conceal the true social costs of that prosperity. As such, they reveal much about the dynamics of early modern global trade to which we are still heir today.

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Jan Davidsz de Heem (Dutch, Utrecht 1606–1683/84 Antwerp)
Still Life with a Glass and Oysters, circa 1640
oil on wood
Metropolitan Museum of Art 71.78