

# COLNAGHI



Willem Claesz. Heda  
*A vanitas still life, 1648*

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WILLEM CLAESZ. HEDA

(Haarlem, 1596 – 1680)

*A VANITAS STILL LIFE with a broken roemer, an upturned tazza, and a peeled lemon, on a ledge, 1648*

Oil on oak panel

48.9 x 63.7 cm.; 19 1/4 x 25 1/8 in.

Signed and dated lower right: *HEDA - 1648*

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## Provenance

William Martin Conway, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Conway of Allington (1856 – 1937);

The Hon. Mrs. Agnes E. Conway Horsfield (1885 – 1950), by descent from the above;

Her Estate Sale, Sotheby's, London, 31 January 1951, lot 31 (£400);

P. de Boer, Amsterdam (stock no. 4806), acquired from the above sale;

Polak, New York, NY, acquired from the above in 1951;

Anonymous Sale ('The Property of a Gentleman'), Christie's, London, 7 July 1978, lot 216;

Private collection, Belgium, acquired at the above sale; thence by descent to the present owner.

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Willem Claesz. Heda was among the leading masters of the monochromatic *banketje* or breakfast still lifes for which his native city of Haarlem became known. They usually feature humble Dutch foods such as bread, cheese, and beer. Heda crafted spartan yet monumental compositions of great virtuosity, reveling in his ability to show the fall of light on different surfaces, the reflections on pewter ware, and the textures of exotic foods. The imported lemon demonstrates the changing Dutch lifestyle that resulted from global trade. Heda seemed to temper his display of luxury with moralizing overtones, suggested by the disorder of cups and plates, as well as the wastefulness evident in the aftermath of this meal.

While many of Willem Claesz. Heda's still life's from the 1640s and beyond become elaborate and even grandiose, others, such as this one and a similar small-scale composition in the Rijksmuseum, retain the informal simplicity of his early works (fig. 1).

Another example close to the Schuybroek one, with the same arrangement of large *roemer*, overturned *tazza* and half-peeled lemons, was sold at auction in 2012. If the dating of 1630 on that picture is correct, Heda's revisiting of more pared-down compositions lasted for twenty years or more. In these works, it is not the colour that defines the objects – Heda's palette is muted, almost monochrome – but rather the reflected and refracted light.

The silver *tazza* in the painting has recently been identified as silver *tazza* made in Amsterdam in 1618 which bears an unidentified clover maker's mark. Heda evidently owned the piece as he included it in several of his most celebrated banquet scenes, including the present work. Heda's *tazza* was recently acquired by the National Gallery of Art, Washington (fig. 2).

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Fig. 1. Willem Claesz. Heda, *Still life with a broken glass*, signed and date 1642, oil on panel, 58.8 x 67.5 cm., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Fig. 2. Dutch 17th Century Standing Dish (Tazza), 1618 silver National Gallery of Art, Washington.

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## COLNAGHI *London*

26 BURY STREET, LONDON SW1Y 6AL  
UNITED KINGDOM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
10AM-6PM

+44 (0)20 7491 7408

[contact@colnaghi.com](mailto:contact@colnaghi.com)

## COLNAGHI *Madrid*

CALLE GENERAL CASTAÑOS 9  
PLANTA BAJA, DCHA.  
28004 MADRID

MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
BY APPOINTMENT

[spain@colnaghi.com](mailto:spain@colnaghi.com)

## COLNAGHI *New York*

23 EAST 67TH STREET, FOURTH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10065  
USA

MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
10AM-6PM

+1 (917) 388-3825

[newyork@colnaghi.com](mailto:newyork@colnaghi.com)

## COLNAGHI *Brussels*

RUE JACQUES JORDAENS 30  
1000 BRUXELLES  
BELGIUM

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

[brussels@colnaghi.com](mailto:brussels@colnaghi.com)