Jacob van Es (Flemish, 1590–1666), Still Life, 1630, oil on wood panel, 29¾ x 42 in.; 75.57 x 106.7 cm
Museum purchase through income from the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund 1970–75 and Major Arts Purchase, 1974.56

Joslyn Art Museum

About the Artist: Jacob Fopsen van Es (c. 1596–1666), was born in Antwerp, a center for the arts in Flanders (now northern Belgium). Although little is known about his life and training, van Es specialized in a particular genre of painting like many Netherlandish artists of the time. He primarily painted still lifes of meals, particularly “breakfast pieces.” His meticulously rendered works are representative of Flemish still lifes of the early seventeenth century, achieving him great renown during his lifetime.

Art Chats

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Look:

Van Es was admired for his paintings called “breakfast pieces”—carefully studied still lifes showing light meals with eating and drinking utensils.

Allow your eyes to roam around this breakfast table and pay close attention to the shapes. How many ovals can you spot?

Now think about the color. Where has the artist used light, soft, buttery yellows? Did you know by repeating certain shapes and colors, artists like van Es help move our eyes through a painting? Chew on that!

Discuss:

Does this look like your breakfast table? What do these objects—the silver and glass goblets, the imported fresh fruits, and expensive meats and cheeses—say about the seventeenth-century Dutch person who just stepped away from the table? What do you think called them away from the table so suddenly?

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