

cat. no. 7

**Jan van de Velde III**

Haarlem 1620 – 1662 Enkhuizen or Amsterdam

*Still Life with an Earthenware Jug, a Tortoise Shell Tobacco Box, a 'Gouda' Pipe, a Glass of Beer and Tobacco Smoking Implements*

Signed on the ledge: Jan vande velde Fecit, and dated 1658 with Amsterdam coat of arms on the belly of the jug

Oil on panel

38.1 x 29.8 cm.

**Provenance:**

New York, Otto Naumann, Ltd.

Bellevue (WA), collection Theleine Scheumann (1931-2021), since 1990

Her sale, New York, Sotheby's, 26 January 2023, lot 8

This beautiful intimate composition shows a white earthenware jug with a metal lid in the form of a cup and decorated with the coat of arms of Amsterdam, a long clay pipe from Gouda, a tortoise shell tobacco box, a glass of beer and a burning wick.<sup>1</sup> Against a deep green background, these objects, lit from the left, are carefully composed, clustered together towards the left of a rustic wooden table. The artist contrasts translucent with solid materials, with the beautifully rendered translucent tortoise shell box, while the end of the wick can be glimpsed through the translucent

medium of the beer. The tortoise shell box is filled with tobacco, which is scattered in front of the pipe. The cast shadows, such as those of the wick, draped over the pipe and hanging off the edge of the table, creates a strong sense of three-dimensional objects in space. The olive-green colored bands around the base as well as the top of the jug and on its body were originally painted with smalt, but this blue pigment can discolor with time. Despite the Amsterdam crest, such jugs, also known as 'wapenkruiken' (jugs with coat-of-arms), were produced in Raeren, Germany,



and were exclusively made for the city of Amsterdam. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam houses a similarly lidded jug,<sup>2</sup> while a similar jug is available at Salomon Lilian Dutch Old Master Paintings (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> The handcrafted beer glass or beaker was a luxury item in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Amsterdam was an important trading place and home to various breweries. Beer was a highly popular drink and it played a prominent role in the daily lives of the people. Local beer styles included varieties like ‘witbier’ (wheat beer) and ‘scharrebier’ (light beer), which were popular choices among the citizens of Amsterdam. The city’s beer was often consumed in taverns and public houses, serving as gathering places for both locals and travelers. The Dutch brewing tradition emphasized ales, and beer was brewed using malted barley, water, hops, and yeast. The beer industry was regulated by the city authorities, and breweries had to adhere to strict guidelines to ensure the quality and safety of their products.



Fig. 1 Jug with the coat of arms of Amsterdam, Salomon Lilian Dutch Old Master Paintings



Fig. 2 Jan van de Velde III, *Still life with a Stoneware Jug and Pipe*, signed Jan van de Velde. fecit on the table and dated 1650 on the belly of the jug, oil on panel, 35.9 x 27.9 cm., The National Gallery, Washington, accession number 2019.13.1

Van de Velde began his career under the influence of such Haarlem masters as Pieter Claesz (1597-1661), but soon developed his own style. He worked in Amsterdam from 1641 until the end of his life. *Still Life with an earthenware jug, tortoise shell tobacco box, ‘Gouda’ pipe, glass of beer and tobacco smoking implements* is an exquisite example of the approximately only 40 paintings Van de Velde executed during his short career. Together with Jan Treck (c. 1606-1652) he introduced the present type of still life, the so called ‘toebackje’, tobacco still life, with smokers’ paraphernalia, to Amsterdam. Although herbalists attributed healing effects to tobacco, as a stimulant it was identified with drunkenness and regarded as a sin. Bergström classifies this theme as a Vanitas still life where painter and viewer were supposed to reflect the passage of all worldly things.<sup>4</sup> Other artists who painted similar still lifes include Johannes Fris (c. 1627-1672), Pieter Janssens called Elinga (1623-1682) and Edwaert Collier (1642-1708).

A comparable painting, only executed 8 years before in 1650, *Still life with a stoneware jug and pipe* was acquired in 2019 for the collection of The National Gallery in Washington (fig. 2). Another *Still Life with smokers' paraphernalia* is in the collection of The Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest (fig. 3).

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Fig. 3 Jan van de Velde III, *Still Life with Smokers' Paraphernalia*, trace of signature, oil on panel, 43.4 x 32.4 cm., The Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. no. 190

#### Notes

- 1 Clay Gouda pipes were white, with a long slender stem and a small bowl. They were produced from 1617 onwards in the Gouda region where pipe clay was produced in huge quantities.
- 2 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, object number BK-KOG-555.
- 3 And exhibited with the painting at TEFAF, Maastricht, 2024.
- 4 I. Bergström, *Dutch Still Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, London 1956, p. 154.