

	Object:	Still Life with Dead Hare and Birds
	Museum:	Szépművészeti Múzeum Dózsa György út 41. 1146 Budapest
	Collection:	Régi Képtár
	Inventory number:	REK_729

Description

Hunting has long been entertainment for the privileged. No wonder then that the genre of painted hunting trophies flourished most in Flanders in Rubens's time, which more than any other era was in the sway of the cult of heaving plenty and worldly extravagance. Surprisingly, though obviously not coincidentally, in the other half of the Netherlands, newly seceded Protestant Holland, an art of the most puritan approach sprang up simultaneously. One might think there would be no exchange between these two worlds, even though their watchful eyes were always fixed on the other - but there, indeed, was. The prince of game pieces, Jan Fijt visited Holland in 1642, after which the tone of his painting changed considerably. Into the triumphant uproar of brazen Baroque there crept more muted, melancholy chords. The magnificent spread of the kill of game here is more a lament to mortality, than an invitation to a vain banquet. The message is completed with a symbol aptly Dutch in its directness: thorns referring to the passion of Christ. But Fijt could not change his spots, and even with its serious content, in this picture the sound of triumph dominates - that of the painter, ostentatiously flaunting his truly compelling skill. And that of his virtuoso brush, which like Proust's famous madeleine, through the eye awakens the other senses too, so that the softness of the splendid hare's fur becomes almost palpable, or we strain to hear the dying warbles of these brilliantly coloured songbirds. Axel Vécsey

Basic data

Material/Technique:	canvas / oil
Measurements:	62.5 x 86 cm

Events

Painted	When	1640s
	Who	Jan Fyt (1611-1661)

Where

Keywords

- Painting