

Kunst Museum Winterthur

Press release

Dining with Pieter Claesz

Focus on Still Life

14 November 2026 – 14 March 2027

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten

[Press orientation about the exhibition](#)

Thursday, 12 November 2026, 11 o'clock, or Individual tour upon request.

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten, Stadthausstrasse 6, 8400 Winterthur

The Kunst Museum Winterthur, in collaboration with the Kaiserschild Foundation, is dedicating a small-scale exhibition to the Dutch Baroque painter Pieter Claesz, running from 14 November 2026 to 14 March 2027. The focus is on his intricately composed still lifes depicting meals, in which pleasure and prosperity are combined with an awareness of the transience of life. The exhibition presents works by Pieter Claesz and his Haarlem circle in dialogue with high-resolution digital resources that form part of the Kaiserschild Art Defined project.

The table is set: crispy rolls, glistening oysters, salted fish, pâtés and artfully sliced lemons beckon you to help yourself. But beware: in the still lifes of Pieter Claesz (1597/98–1660), nothing is quite as it seems. With sophisticated lighting effects and astonishingly nuanced surface details, he transformed laid tables into deceptively realistic, sensuous visual worlds. Metal, glass, fabrics and food are rendered with such precision that they almost invite you to reach out and touch them. Claesz's still lifes reflect the everyday world of the Dutch bourgeoisie during the so-called Golden Age. The food and precious objects depicted are symbols of prosperity and enjoyment. At the same time, these seemingly innocuous scenes possess a deeper meaning: overturned glasses, food that has been partially consumed, extinguished candles and watches are reminders of the transience of life. It is particularly in the vanitas still lifes that the Baroque conception of the fleeting nature and transience of all earthly things becomes visibly apparent.

Claesz ranks amongst the most significant still-life painters of the 17th century; he is regarded as the most innovative exponent of the so-called monochrome 'Banketjes' (Banquet paintings). Around 1620/1621, he settled in the economically burgeoning city of Haarlem, where he developed his distinctive style. Over the course of four decades, he produced an extensive body of work; more than 240 of his paintings are known today. Whereas older still lifes were often characterised by opulent colours and an abundance of objects, Claesz favoured muted colours, clear compositions with few objects, and finely balanced effects of light and shadow.

The exhibition *Dining with Pieter Claesz* focuses both on the artist's circle in Haarlem and, by extension, on a major centre of Dutch still-life painting. In Haarlem, depictions of set tables and sumptuous displays had already established themselves by the beginning of the century. Claesz, however, played a decisive role in further developing this tradition. His culinary still lifes made him famous in his own time and became his hallmark. They demonstrate exceptional mastery in the illusionistic depiction of materials and surfaces and have shaped the image of the Dutch still life to this day.

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Originals in dialogue with digital presentation

A particular focus of the exhibition is on teaching. In collaboration with the Kaiserschild Foundation in Vienna and as part of the 'Kaiserschild Art Defined' project, six paintings were digitised in high resolution. The digitised images allow viewers to examine even the finest details of the paintings. An interactive media station invites visitors to explore the digital images and compare them with the originals. Short films and a digital guide provide further insights into Claesz's life and work, as well as the cultural and historical context of his works.

Dining with Pieter Claesz is the result of a collaboration between the Kaiserschild Foundation, the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and the Alte Galerie at the Universalmuseum Joanneum in Graz. Following exhibitions in Vienna and Graz, Winterthur is the third venue. For the exhibition in Winterthur, the display will be expanded to include additional works by Pieter Claesz and artists associated with him, drawn from the museum's own collections as well as from other Swiss museums and private collections.

Images and information about the exhibition: kmw.ch/presse or upon request

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