

ARTH 345 Spring 2021
Discussion 3

Hochstrasser, Julie. *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age*, 204-27. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007.

Please write a short essay (250 – 300 words) that addresses these prompts:

- In this reading, Julie Hochstrasser studies the presence of African figures in sumptuous Dutch still life paintings from the second half of the 17th century. According to her, how do these paintings portray Africans? What was the effect or implication of juxtaposing the figures with objects acquired through trade?
- How might these visual images have shaped the Dutch viewers' awareness or understanding of their nation's participation in the Atlantic slave trade?

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These are not questions that necessarily have straightforward or correct answers. I am more interested in how you unpack Hochstrasser's arguments and engage with her ideas. So please feel free to ask your own questions in the essay or point out passages that you find difficult to follow. It should still primarily be an analysis of Hochstrasser's book excerpt, however, and not your readings of the pictures.



Barend van der Meer, *Finely Laid Table with a Moor*, c. 1675-80



Jurriaen van Streek, *Still Life with Moor and Porcelain Vessels*, c. 1670



The figures in all these scenes clearly play a servile role; miles away from their homes, their histories, they are subordinated to a setting that is familiar to Dutch still life. Deeply offensive as it is, like the foreign objects displayed in these still lifes, black Africans were lucrative commodities of the slave trade of the West India Company during the very period when these paintings were done, and they too are served up, almost as if on silver platters themselves, divorced from any details of the larger business of how they got there.

Hochstrasser, p. 208

Jurriaen van Streek, *Still Life with Moor and Porcelain Vessels*, c. 1670 (detail)

Jan Davidsz de Heem, *Grand Still Life with Moor and Parrots*, 1641



Abraham van Tempel, *Seacaptain Jan van Amstel and his wife Anna Boxhoorn*, 1671





Jan Mijtens, *Margaretha van Raephorst*, 1668