

# HESSE FLATOW

Keenan, Annabel. "Contemporary Painters Are Channeling the Luxe Still Lifes of the Dutch Golden Age".  
*Artsy*, January 20, 2025. Online.

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## Contemporary Painters Are Channeling the Luxe Still Lifes of the Dutch Golden Age

Annabel Keenan

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Kirsten Deirup  
*Benign Right, 2023*  
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This contemporary use of symbolism is also at the heart of Kirsten Deirup's work. Resembling ecological *memento mori*, Deirup's still lifes use muted colors and hazy backgrounds, as spindly plants grow from half-dead stems. Like Dutch Golden Age artists, Deirup adds everyday objects, including power cords and slices of bread. "When I paint [these] items, I aim to imbue them with meaning that speaks to ideas around consumption, utility, and ecology," she said. "In doing so, I hope to create a tension that resonates between beauty and decay."

In *Benign Right* (2023), this tension is apparent in the seemingly dying tree planted in a woven basket. At the ends of the branches are brooch-like flowers with gaudy gemstones, apparently trying to mask the decay with opulence. Two spray bottles sit nearby: Are they filled with life-giving water, or perhaps a chemical that might artificially sustain the plant, but will inevitably further the destruction of the natural world?