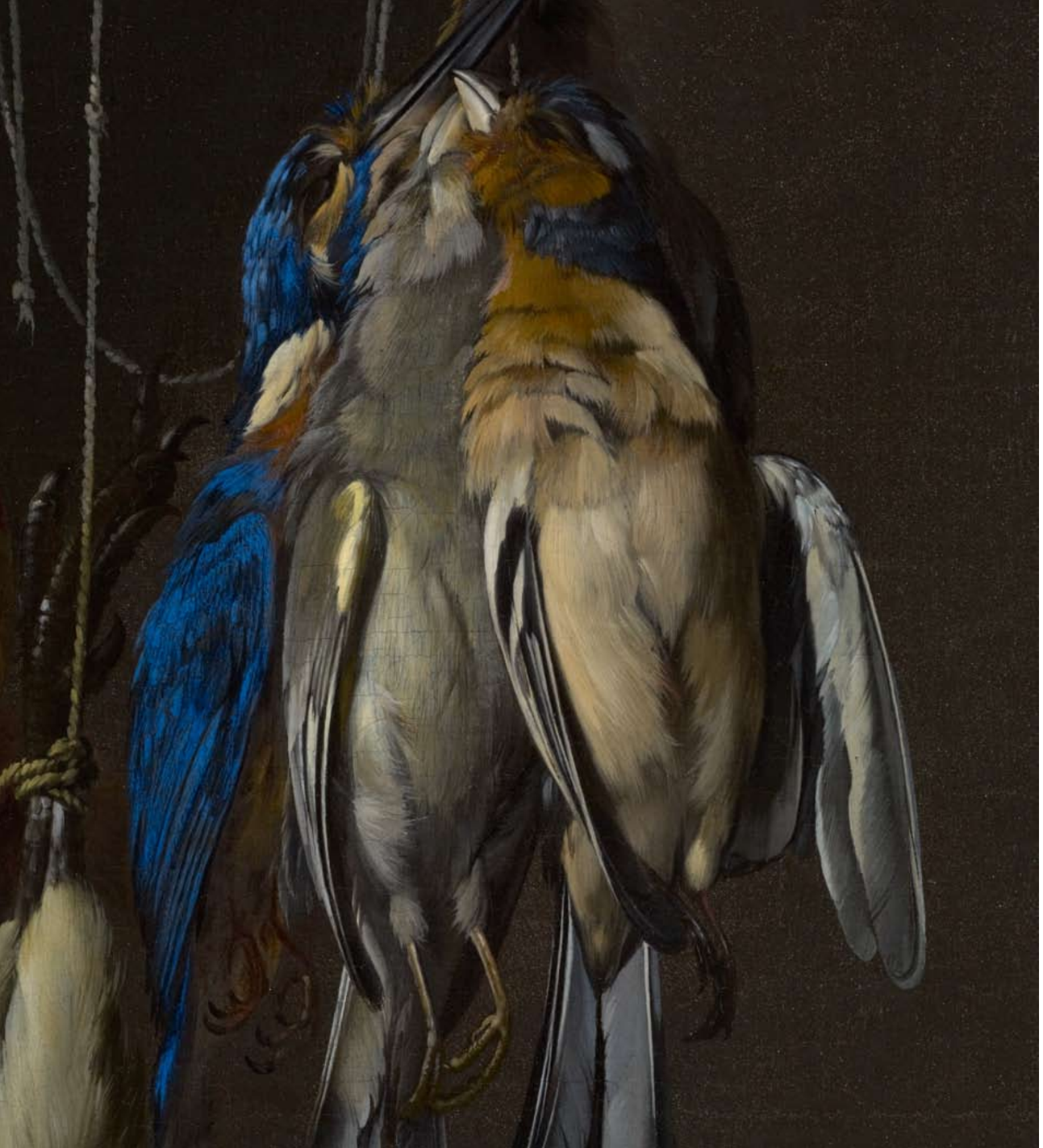

Elegance and Refinement

The Still-Life Paintings of Willem van Aelst

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Skira Rizzoli New York

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON

First published in the United States of America
in 2012 by

Skira Rizzoli Publications, Inc.
300 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010
www.rizzoliusa.com

Printed in the United States of America

2012 2013 2014 2015 / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Catalog Control Number:
2011939295
ISBN-13: 978-0-8478-3821-9

This book accompanies the exhibition *Elegance and Refinement: The Still-Life Paintings of Willem van Aelst*, organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston.

The catalogue for this exhibition received generous funding from the Netherland-America Foundation.

JACKET (FRONT): Detail of cat. 17, *Flowers in a Silver Vase*, 1663
JACKET (BACK): Detail of cat. 7, *Still Life with Melon*, 1652
FRONTISPIECE: Detail of cat. 21, *Hunt Still Life with a Velvet Bag on a Marble Ledge*, c. 1665
PAGE 6: Detail of cat. 11, *Vase of Flowers with a Watch*, 1656
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EXHIBITION ITINERARY

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
March 11–May 28, 2012

National Gallery of Art, Washington
June 24–October 14, 2012

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON

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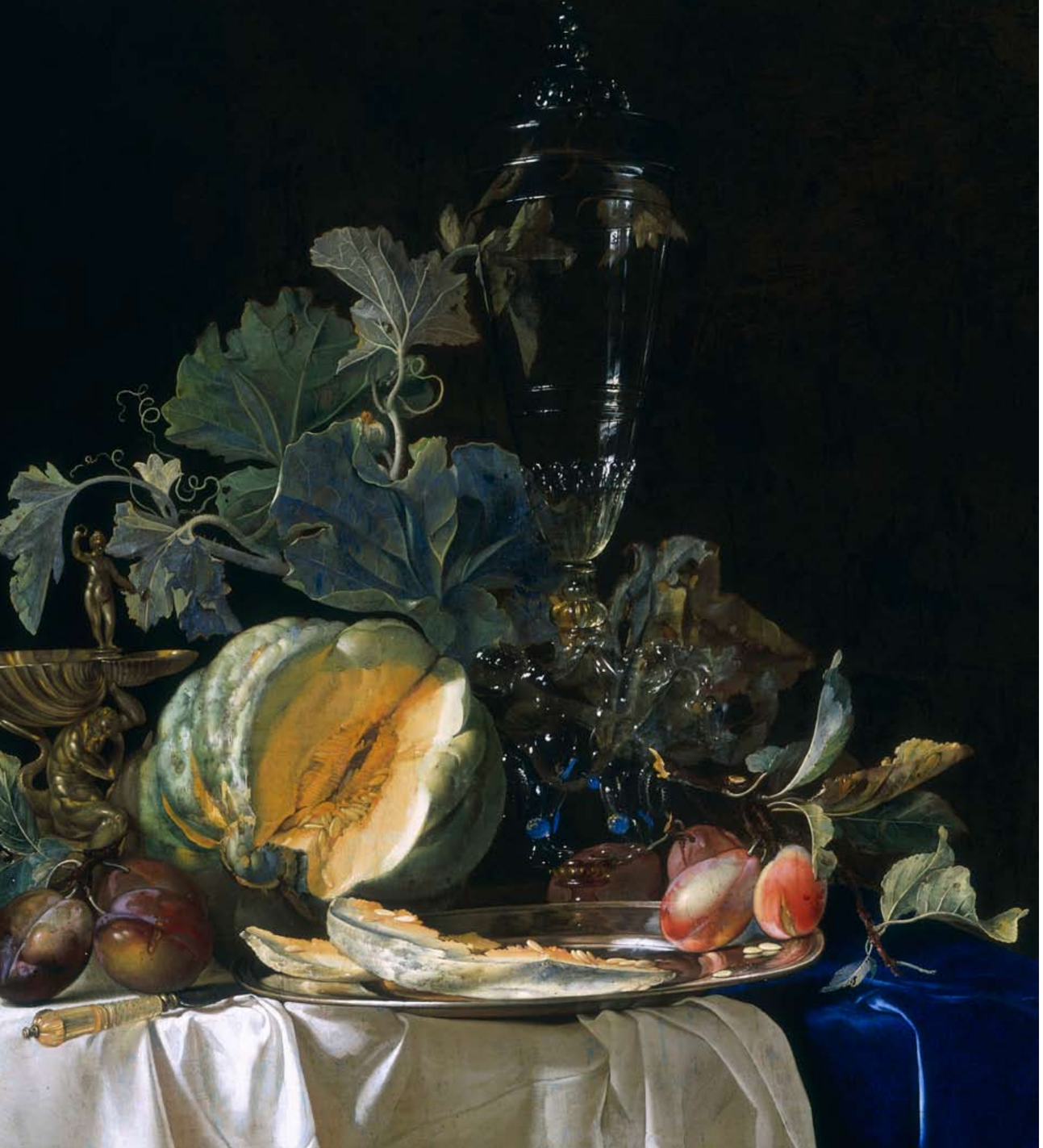
Contents



JAMES CLIFTON

"The Most Exquisite Imitation of Reality":

Northern Art and Artists at the Medici Court

On the morning of October 22, 1667, after hearing Mass at the church of the Santissima Annunziata, the twenty-five-year-old Prince and future Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III de' Medici (fig. 1), set out from Florence with a retinue of more than fifty people—including a valet, a doctor, a secretary, a quartermaster, a treasurer, a confessor, and five cooks—on the first of two journeys across the Alps.[1] The party passed through Switzerland and Germany on the way to the Netherlands; nearly two months after leaving Florence, they entered the Dutch Republic. Cosimo's *maestro di casa*, Filippo Marchetti, noted that Arnhem, the first city they entered, was "very beautiful, clean, and lovely, highly populated, and in particular full of very beautiful women who are very tall and white-skinned."[2] The rest of the Republic proved equally attractive to the visitors. After a brief visit to Utrecht—whose great size and beauty, wide and straight streets, network of canals, large and beautiful buildings, indescribable cleanness, and very beautiful women drew Marchetti's attention—the party proceeded to Amsterdam, "the largest, most beautiful, and richest" city in all of Holland, Flanders, and Germany,[3] where they remained for three weeks. The party moved throughout the Republic: Haarlem (Marchetti notes more beautiful women), Leiden, The Hague, Scheveningen, Delft, Rotterdam, Dordrecht, and then on to Antwerp (still more beautiful—and notably large—women!) and elsewhere in the Spanish Netherlands, and back to the Republic for further touring before returning to Florence, where they arrived on May 12, 1668. The prince was home only a few months before setting out again, this time to Spain, England, France, and back to the Netherlands.

Cosimo traveled grandly; he was often met with salutes of trumpet, drums, and artillery. He toured a variety of public institutions, where he was entertained by local officials. On one occasion, for example, the Amsterdam burgomasters and other officials showed his party the town hall, with its richly decorated rooms and magnificent clockwork, and treated them to pastries and exquisite wine,

Detail of cat. 7

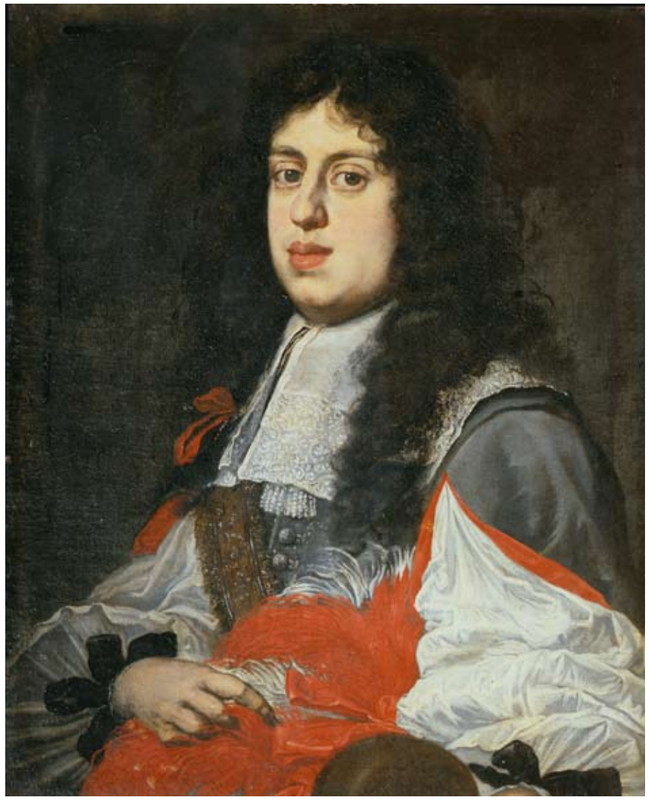
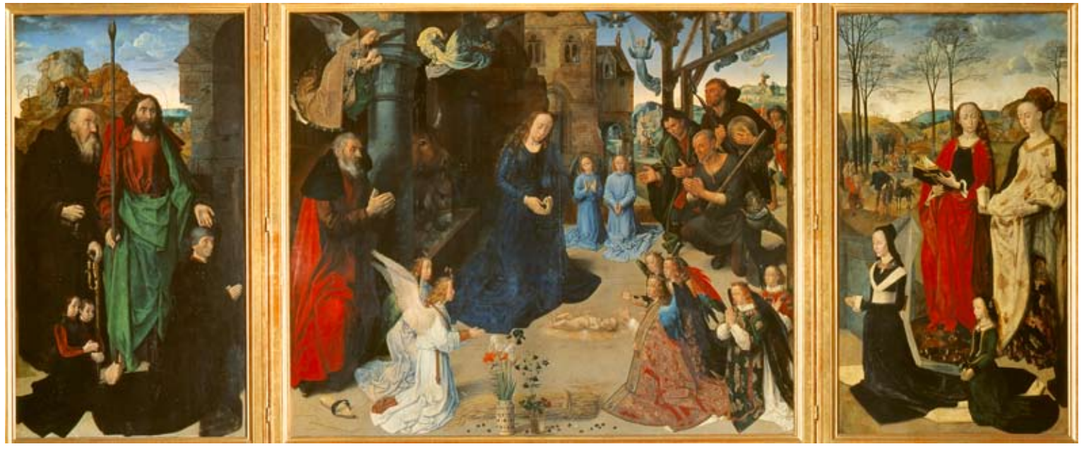


Fig. 1. Justus Suttermans, *Cosimo III de' Medici (1642–1723)*, c. 1660. Oil on canvas, 28⅜ × 22⅞ in. (72 × 58 cm). Florence, Uffizi, Inv. 1890, n. 2875.

with toasts drunk to the health of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to the health and preservation of the Dutch States, to Cosimo himself, and on and on for an hour. But his purpose was educational and pleasurable rather than overtly political.[4] In Amsterdam alone he visited a publishing house, a printer, an insane asylum, the East India company, a synagogue, "various churches of the heretics" (as his companion, the Marchese Filippo Corsini, put it), a *beguinage*, an aviary, a furniture market, a fish market, the financial exchange, and an orphanage, among other sights. He attended the theater in Amsterdam and a ball in The Hague, strolled among the people, and joined a crowd to watch a woman skillfully and gracefully skating on a frozen Amsterdam canal. As Cosimo's personal secretary Apollonio Bassetti wrote in a letter from Amsterdam, in spite of the gloomy weather, the prince remained "ever in full health and no less fully satisfied with the sojourn in this city, where his inquisitive desire finds continuous nourishment."[5]

On both trips and throughout the Netherlands, Cosimo was welcomed into the homes of well-known private collectors who showed him their paintings, sculptures, decorative arts objects, and cabinets of curiosity filled with exotic wonders—both natural and artificial—often from the Republic's far-flung trading posts, from which the collectors made the prince gifts. Paintings were brought to Cosimo for his delectation and possible acquisition, and artists visited him. He, in turn, paid visits to the studios and homes of leading artists, and sometimes ordered or acquired works. Among them were Gerrit Dou, Frans van Mieris, Caspar Netscher, Jan Davidsz. de Heem, Otto Marseus van Schrieck, and Willem van Aelst, who was described by Corsini as among "the best masters of the country, . . . who painted many things for the Signor Cardinale Giovan Carlo [de' Medici] in Italy."[6] He also saw paintings by Rembrandt and may have met this "famous painter,"[7] as Corsini called him.

The eighteenth-century biographer of the house of Medici, Jacopo Riguccio Galluzzi, asserted that the Dutch paid homage to Cosimo because of their high opinion of his father, the Grand Duke Ferdinando II, as prince and protector of artists and men of letters.[8] But Ferdinando and Cosimo were only the latest of a long line of wealthy Italians to value the art and culture of the Netherlands. In the fifteenth century, even the Italians accounted Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden among the best painters in Europe.[9] High-quality Netherlandish paintings made their way to Italy, where one could find Van Eycks in the collection of Pope Eugenius IV, part of whose



pontificate was spent in Florence; a Rogier van der Weyden *Deposition* triptych in Ferrara, seen in 1449 and praised by the antiquarian Ciriaco d'Ancona, a Medici agent; a Jan van Eyck *Saint Jerome* owned by Lorenzo de' Medici;[10] and, perhaps most important for Florence, Hugo van der Goes's monumental triptych, the *Adoration of the Shepherds* of around 1473–78 (fig. 2), commissioned and sent to Florence by Tommaso Portinari, the manager of the Bruges branch of the Medici bank.[11]

The Medici, one of Europe's premier banking families of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, had been active collectors of Netherlandish art since the fifteenth century.[12] After the family, in the person of Cosimo I (1519–1574), gained the hereditary title and powers of Duke of Florence in 1531 (and then Grand Duke in 1569), their collecting accelerated, and they began employing artists, as well as scientists, musicians, literati, and craftsmen, from all over Europe at their court. Some artists from north of the Alps gained international renown under the aegis of the Medici, foremost among them the Flemish sculptor Giambologna (Jean Boulogne, 1529–1608), who spent almost his entire career in Florence, rising to the position of court sculptor to the Medici, and the Flemish painter and draftsman Johannes Stradanus (Jan van der Straet, 1523–1605), who also spent many years in Florence producing frescoes, oil paintings, and the designs for numerous tapestries and prints for the Medici, such as the *Boar Drive toward a Pit*, part of a series of forty-four engravings of hunt scenes dedicated to the late Cosimo I and published by Philips Galle in Antwerp in 1578 (fig. 3). The Dutch artist and biographer Karel van Mander lamented in 1604 that the "beautiful city of Florence . . . enticed and retains for her own enrichment . . . pearls from our Netherlands"—that is, artists of merit.[13]

In the seventeenth century, the Medici's primary portraitist, and one of the most renowned portraitists anywhere in Europe, was a Fleming: Justus Suttermans (1597–1681).[14] He and his assistants painted innumerable portraits of the Grand Dukes Ferdinando II and Cosimo III, other Medici family members—brothers, sisters, and spouses, both in Florence and elsewhere—and various luminaries associated with the Medici court. One of his more unusual portraits is *The Wardrober of Pratolino with Cooks and Hunters of the Medici Court* of around 1634 (fig. 4), which, like Stradanus's print and tapestry designs before it (fig. 3) and Willem van

Fig. 2. Hugo van der Goes, *Adoration of the Shepherds (Portinari Altarpiece)*, c. 1473–78. Oil on wood, 100 × 120 in. (253 × 304 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

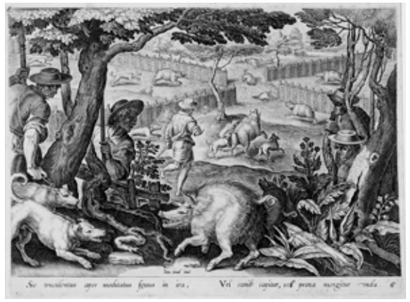
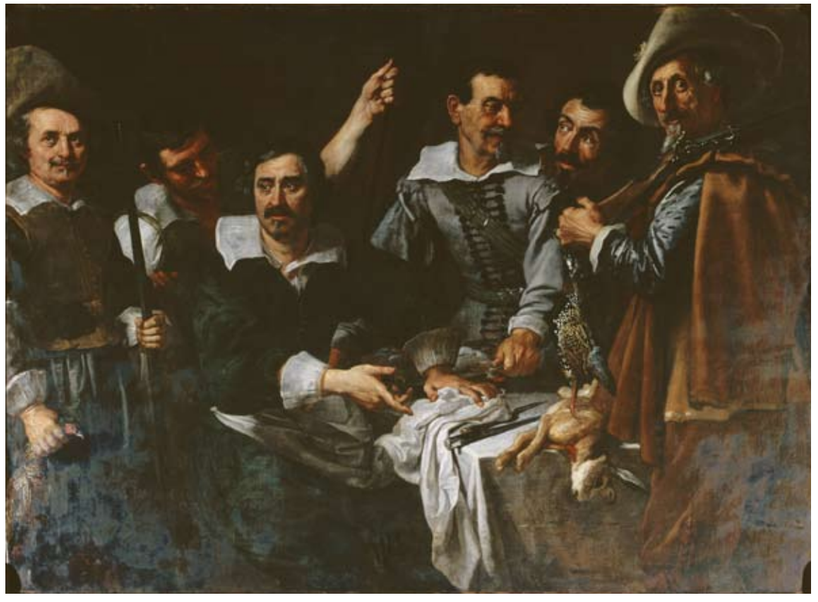


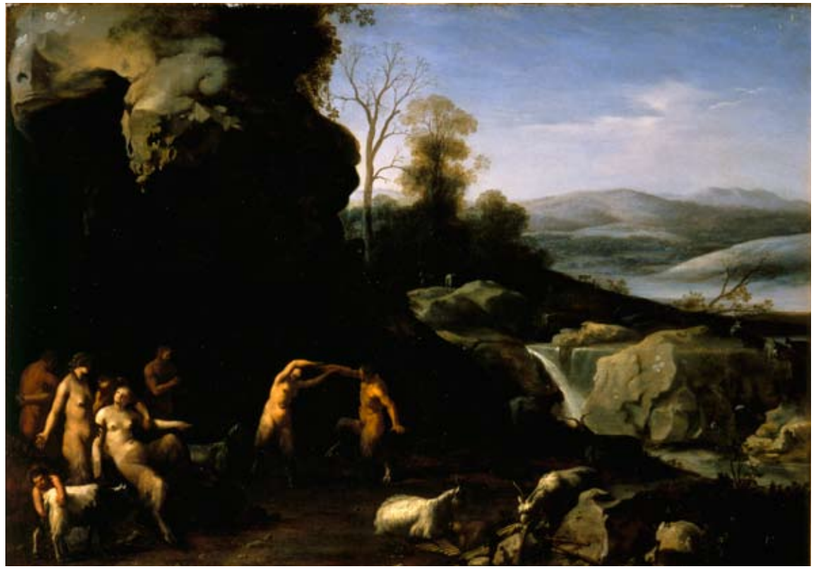
Fig. 3. Philips Galle after Johannes Stradanus, *Boar Drive toward a Pit*, 1578. Engraving, 8½ × 11½ in. (21.6 × 29.3 cm). Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston.

Aelst's still lifes after it (*Still Life with Game*, 1652 [cat. 9], and *Pronk Still Life with Fruit and Game*, 1654 [cat. 10]), demonstrates the ongoing interest of the Medici in the hunt and in game still lifes.[15] No other artist could rival Giambologna or Suttermans for longevity at the Medici court, but many worked there for shorter periods—including Van Aelst—and many, many more must have paused in Florence during their travels up and down the peninsula.[16]

But the Medici engagement with Northern artists goes far beyond employing them at court. Through their agents elsewhere in Italy and north of the Alps, the Medici were able both to commission works and to acquire works already executed. By the time Van Aelst arrived in Florence, the Medici collections already comprised a significant number of Northern pictures, most of them recent.[17] Cosimo II acquired important works by the Caravaggist Gerrit van Honthorst, then resident in Rome,[18] as well as small-format landscapes on panel and copper by several artists, including Adam Elsheimer, Paul Bril, and Cornelis Poelenburgh (fig. 5). Poelenburgh, whose works are particularly numerous in the collections, may have been in residence at the Medici court around 1620, at Cosimo II's request.[19] In the next generation, Cosimo II's nephews, Cardinal Giovan Carlo (1611–1663) and Cardinal Leopoldo (1617–1675), added many Northern works to the Medici collections. Giovan Carlo, whose vast collection of paintings was particularly strong in landscapes and still lifes, was Van Aelst's primary patron in Florence: thirteen of his paintings are documented in Giovan Carlo's house in the via della Scala, among them *Still Life with Ram's Head* (cat. 8), and *Still Life with Game* (cat. 9). Several of Van Aelst's works hung in a luxurious room next to paintings by Raphael and Correggio.[20] Cardinal Leopoldo, one of the most prolific collectors in the history of the Medici family, owned five paintings by Van Aelst, among them *Pronk Still Life with Fruit and Game* (cat. 10), and four by the innovative Dutch nature painter Otto Marseus van Schrieck (1619/20–1678), an associate of Van Aelst who may have spent some time at the Medici court.[21]

The Medici collecting of landscape and still-life painting, both Northern and Italian, in the seventeenth century may be associated with the family's long-standing interest in the natural sciences,[22] especially horticulture. Cosimo I was renowned for his personal knowledge of plant species and, in 1543–44, established the first botanical garden in Europe for the University of Pisa.[23] Cosimo's elder son, Francesco I, who was particularly keen on gardens for both pleasure and scientific investigation, expanded Cosimo's botanical gardens and developed new gardens on Medici property, with the direction of the Flemish botanist Giuseppe Casabona (or Benincasa; that is, Jodocus De Goethuysen).[24] The Medici's personal gardens, along with their villas, were painted in 1598–99 in a series of fourteen lunettes by the naturalized Flemish painter Giusto Utens (d. 1609) for the Villa di Artimino, commissioned by Grand Duke Ferdinando I (fig. 6).[25] The gardens were further developed in the seventeenth century. Giovan Carlo's lifelong passion for botany and horticulture, manifested in his choice of still-life and landscape subjects for his paintings collection, is especially notable. Indeed, the natural sciences in general flourished under the aegis of the Medici, exemplified by the founding of the Accademia del Cimento under the patronage of Leopoldo in 1657.





TOP:
Fig. 4. Justus Suttermans, *The Wardrober of Pratolino with Cooks and Hunters of the Medici Court*, c. 1634. Oil on canvas, 58⅝ × 80⅜ in. (149 × 204 cm). Galleria Palatina, Florence.

BOTTOM:
Fig. 5. Cornelis Poelenburgh, *Landscape with Dancing Satyrs*, c. 1620. Oil on copper, 17½ × 24¾ in. (44.5 × 63 cm). Galleria Palatina, Florence.

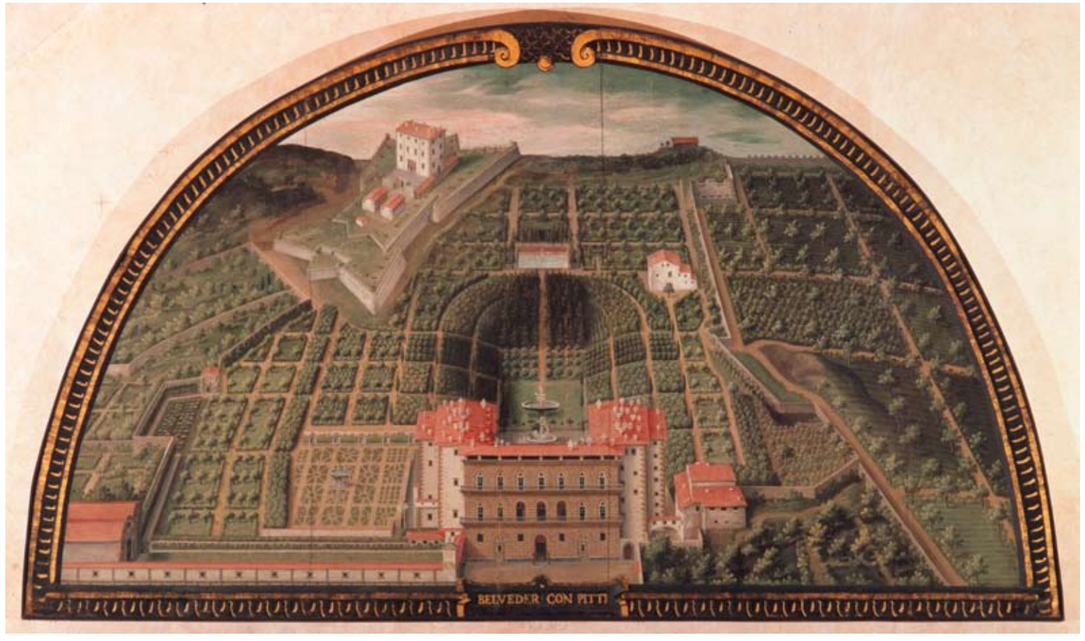


Fig. 6. Giusto Utens, *The Belvedere with Palazzo Pitti*, 1598–99. Oil on canvas, 56¼ × 112¼ in. (143 × 285 cm). Museo Storico Topografico "Firenze Com'era," Florence.

The Medici interest in the natural sciences was complemented by support of scientific—especially botanical—illustration (often with zoological elements), which was carried out by artists, both Italian and Northern, specializing in this genre, including Jacopo Ligozzi (1547–1627), the German Daniel Fröschl (1563–1613),[26] and Giovanna Garzoni (1600–1670).[27] Garzoni, who was resident at the Medici court in the 1640s and continued to work for them even after her move to Rome in 1651, executed both botanical studies and still-life compositions (fig. 7), bringing the sensibilities of the former to the latter.[28] Her delicate gouache paintings on vellum were highly prized by Ferdinando II, and Willem van Aelst (who might have met her in either Florence or Rome) would have been well aware of them. The precise, descriptive rendering of natural forms required for botanical illustration must have been an equally attractive feature of still lifes and other depictions of nature at its most intimate in the Medici collections by Van Aelst and other Northerners, especially Van Schrieck (fig. 8)[29] and Jan van Kessel (fig. 9).[30]

Many paintings by Northern artists collected by the Medici in the seventeenth century, including those by Van Aelst, feature stylistic characteristics comparable to those of fifteenth-century Flemish paintings known in Italy, namely, a verisimilitude even to the point of trompe-l'oeil illusionism based on the precise rendering of carefully observed forms and textures. Ciriaco d'Ancona made conventional yet telling remarks about Rogier van der Weyden's *Deposition* in the mid-fifteenth century, asserting that the figures seem to breathe as if they are alive and that the many objects of different colors and textures—the fabrics, the flora, the architecture, the jewels—are

reproduced so realistically that they seem to be the work not of a human but of nature itself.[31] A century later, Antonfrancesco Doni praised the "Flemings" for their great ability to paint cloths of various types with eye-deceiving naturalism. Such practical skill, Doni says, supports the proverb that they have their brains in their hands.[32]

Such qualities were not always deemed praise-worthy. The assessment of painting in the Netherlands found a pointedly negative expression in well-known comments attributed to Michelangelo by the Portuguese painter Francisco de Holanda in the 1540s: "In Flanders they paint with a view to external exactness or such things as may cheer you and which you cannot disparage. . . . They paint clothes, masonry, the green grass of the fields, the shadow of trees and landscapes, with many figures on this side and many figures on that. And all of this, though it pleases some person, is done without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without selective choice or boldness and finally without substance or vigor."[33] To be sure, Holanda had his own agenda, and the comments should not be taken as unmediated expressions of Michelangelo's viewpoint,[34] but the distinction they draw between the naturalism of depicted objects in Northern painting and a putatively more rational, even intellectual, foundation in Italian art is consistent with much Italian writing on art.

In spite of the persistent preference of Italian over Northern style by Italian writers—Giorgio Vasari praised Stradanus precisely for having learned well the Italian style[35]—Northern art remained highly desirable to Italian collectors, especially because of its fineness of execution. Northern artists, from an Italian

Fig. 7. Giovanna Garzoni, *Melons*. Galleria Palatina, Florence.

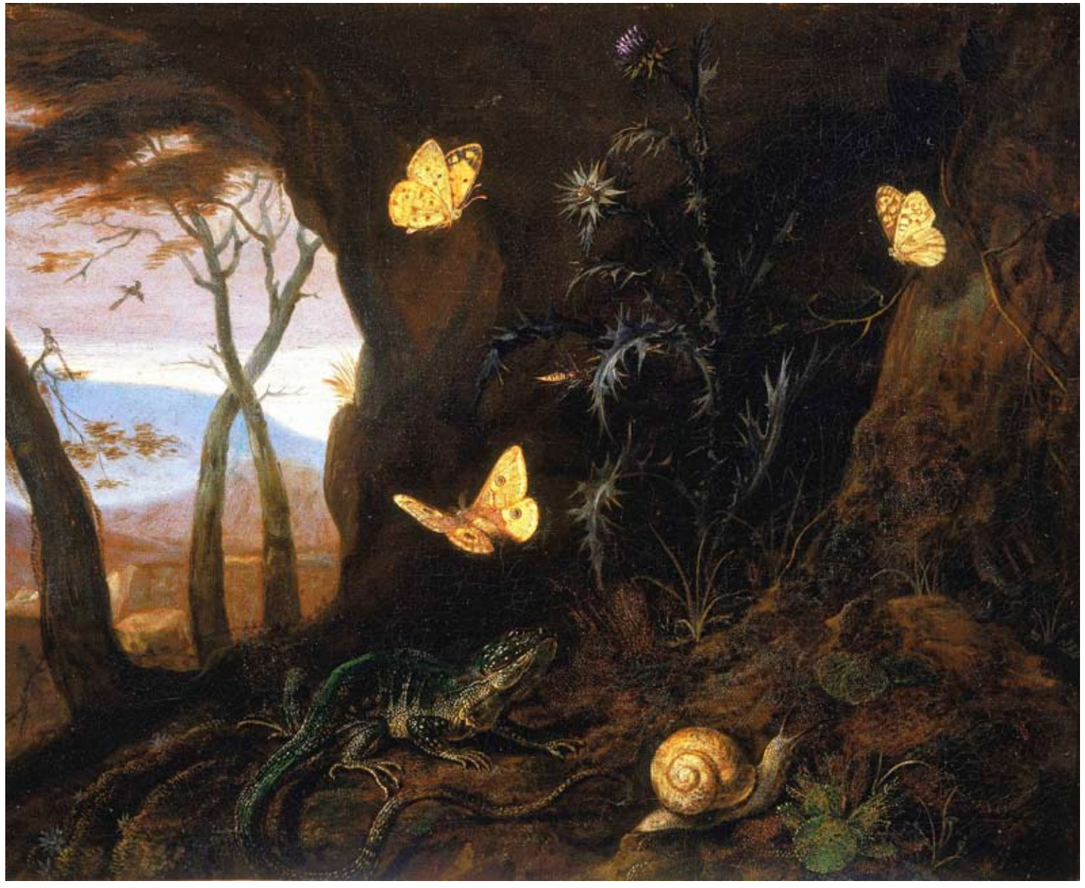
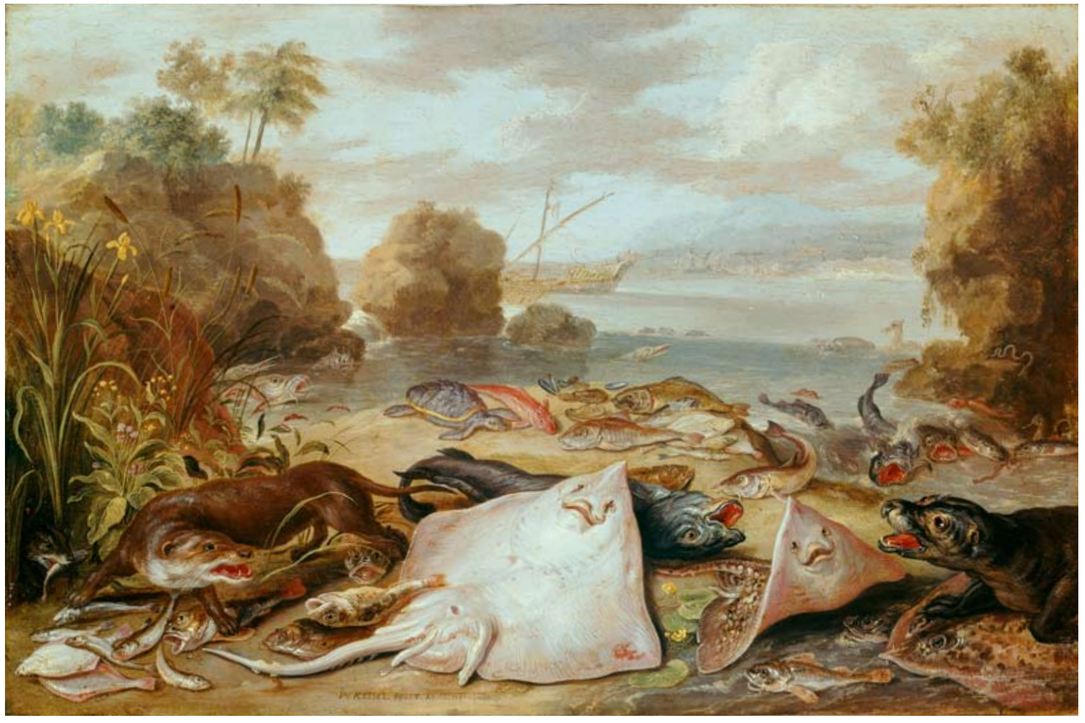


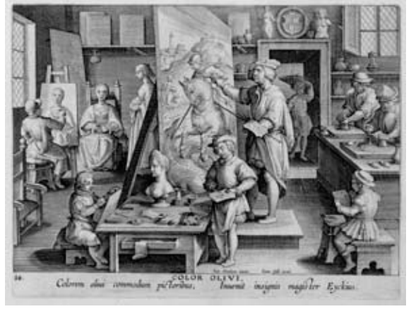
Fig. 8. Otto Marseus van Schrieck, *Landscape with Lizard, Butterflies, and Snail*, c. 1653. Oil on canvas, 15⅛ × 18¾ in. (38.5 × 47.5 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890, no. 1262.

perspective, exemplified manual skill and technical excellence.[36] Their most notable contribution to the history of art, as implied repeatedly in Italian writings of the second half of the sixteenth century, was the innovative use of oil paint, which Vasari influentially attributed to Jan van Eyck, and which was given visual form in a print by Stradanus (fig. 10). And it was not only veristic painting in oil that drew the admiration of the Italians. Northern prints, especially those of Albrecht Dürer (a German, but often referred to as a Fleming) and Lucas van Leyden, were admired and widely collected in Italy. The Venetian Lodovico Dolce praised Dürer's engravings, whose "incomparable minuteness represents the true and the alive in nature, in such a way that his things seem not drawn but painted, and not painted but living."[37]

A curious episode at the Medici court a few years after Cosimo III's return to Florence confirms the persistence of this Italian view of Northern art, as well as the Medici penchant



for such painting.[38] In 1675, the now-Grand Duke sought to have Frans van Mieris execute a devotional painting of Saint Francis Xavier "preaching the Gospel to the nations of the Orient." Ciro Ferri, the favored artist of the Medici, skilled especially in large-scale altarpieces and frescoes, made a composition drawing which was to be forwarded to Van Mieris to show him the concept, because, as Cosimo's secretary Bassetti averred, the Dutch were not very skilled in such matters.[39] Van Mieris was thought to be appropriate for this painting full of people and exotic flora and fauna (much of which was specified) because, in Bassetti's words, his "strength lies in extremely finished small figures and the most exquisite imitation of reality."[40] Not surprisingly, Van Mieris demurred, claiming that his vocation was to paint only those things that he could see with his own eyes.[41] Much more in keeping with the rest of his work was a painting of figures in an



ABOVE:
Fig. 9. Jan van Kessel, *Fish on a Seashore*, 1661. Oil on copper, 7⅛ × 11 in. (18 × 28 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890, n. 1069.

LEFT:
Fig. 10. Hans Collaert II, after Johannes Stradanus, *Oil Paint (Color Olivi)*, c. 1595. Engraving, 8 × 10⅝ in. (20.3 × 27 cm). Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston.

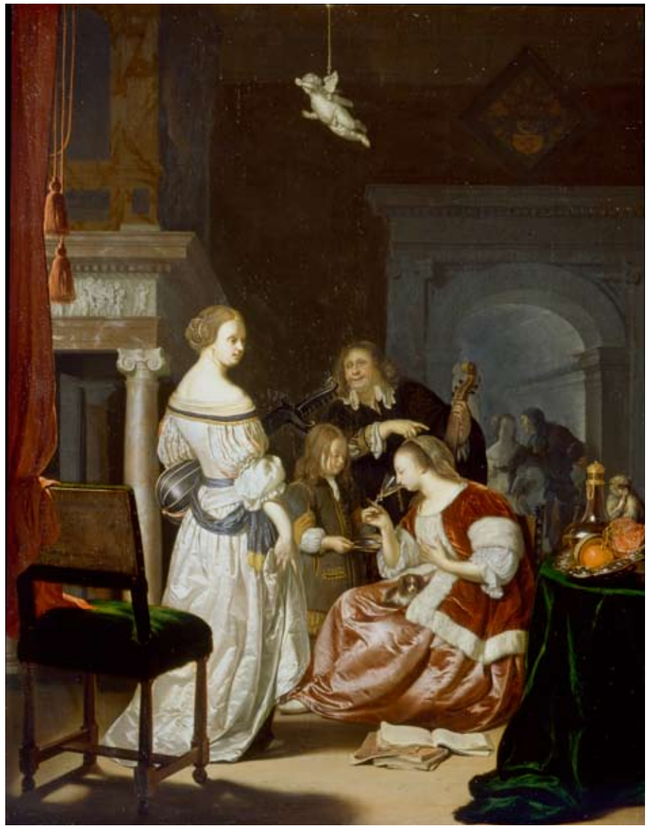


Fig. 11. Frans van Mieris, *"Interior with Figures ("The Family Concert")*, 1675. Oil on canvas, 20⅜ × 15⅞ in. (51.8 × 40.2 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890, n. 1305.

interior, known as *The Family Concert* (fig. 11), which had been commissioned by Cosimo in early 1673 but was not delivered until the spring of 1675, after several advance payments and considerable hand-holding by the Medici agent in Amsterdam of the aging, ill, impecunious, and on at least one occasion drunken artist.[42] Cosimo paid the extraordinarily high sum of 2,500 florins for the painting, and though it seems now to be one of Van Mieris's less successful works, it must have been well received in Florence, since Cosimo pursued the idea for the *Saint Francis Xavier* soon thereafter.

Although the Florentines, in attempting to induce Van Mieris to work outside his normal repertoire in painting a history subject after an Italian design, were perhaps somewhat insensitive to the nature of his art, the episode surrounding the *Saint Francis Xavier* confirms the views prevailing in Florence of not only Van Mieris's work, but perhaps more broadly of the art of the Low Countries since the fifteenth century: namely, that it was detailed, precise, and naturalistic. It is clear that Van Aelst's work in Italy was likewise appreciated for these qualities, which are well evidenced in the works in this exhibition: in 1652, he was praised in a letter from Fabrizio Piermattei, a Medici agent in Rome, to cardinal Giovan Carlo for "the handling of colors with such subtlety that he seems to vie with nature."[43]

1 On Cosimo's trips to the Netherlands, see Geisenheimer 1911; Hoogewerff 1919; Rolfi 1994.
2 Hoogewerff 1919, 203: "assai bella, pulita e vaga, popolata molto, et in particolare ripiena di bellissime donne, che sono alte assai e di bianchezza di carne."
3 Hoogewerff 1919, 204.
4 His purpose was also to escape an unhappy marriage, according to Galluzzi 1781, 175.
5 Hoogewerff 1919, 165.
6 Hoogewerff 1919, 65: "vidde alcune pitture di quattro de' migliori maestri del paese, tra' quali un tal Wan Alest, che molto dipinse al Signor Cardinale Giovan Carlo in Italia." More paintings by Van Aelst were brought to him about a week later (Hoogewerff 1919, 80).
7 Hoogewerff 1919, 67; Corsini wrote: "andò . . . a vedere pitture di diversi maestri, come del disegnatore Wan Welde, del Reinbrent, pittore famoso."
8 Galluzzi 1781, 173; Hoogewerff 1919, 396: "L'opinione che il G. Duca Ferdinando II si era già stabilita in quelle Provincie di Principe e protettore delli artisti e dei letterati, fece che i migliori ingegni di quei Paesi si crederono in dovere di rendere al Principe Cosimo un omaggio, che contestasse la stima che faceano del padre e di tutta la Casa Medici."
9 On Italian patronage and collecting of Netherlandish painting in the fifteenth century, see Christiansen 1998; Nuttall 2004. Three centuries later, Cosimo III could still claim that every painter should know a painting by Jan van Eyck (in a letter of 11 June 1683 to Francesco Terriesi in London, with regard to a supposed Van Eyck self-portrait; see Rolfi 1994, 63).
10 This painting, known from early sources (including Van Mander 1994, 66 [fol. 202r]), is thought by some to be identical to the painting now in Detroit; see Nuttall 2004, 107 (who rejects this identification).
11 On Portinari and the altarpiece, see Nuttall 2004, 43–49, 60–69.
12 On the Medici and Northern art in the fifteenth century, see Christiansen 1998, 43–44; Kent 2000, 262–64; and Nuttall 2004, 105–17.
13 His example was Pieter Candid (Pieter de Witte), who, according to Van Mander, made tapestry designs and other works for Duke Cosimo I de' Medici: "De schoon stadt Florencen / onder meer Peerlen uyt onse Nederlanden / die sy aenlockende tot haer vercieringhe behoudt / heeft oock den constighen Schilder *Pieter de Witte*, welcken met zijn Ouders hem daer langhe heeft ghehouden / en is oft zijn aldaer ghecomen van Brugghe in Vlaender" (Van Mander 1994, 425 [fol. 291v]). This is not to suggest that the Medici attracted and employed only Northern artists, or were even particularly partial to them. Significant Italian artists also came from elsewhere in Italy to work for the Medici—in the seventeenth century, for example, Salvator Rosa, Pietro da Cortona, and Luca Giordano.
14 On Suttermans, see especially Florence 1983; Stoppato 2006.
15 On the painting, see Lisa Goldenberg Stoppato in Papi 2010, 304–07 (cat. 92).
16 Notable in this context is the Fleming Jan Fyt, who executed a number of paintings of animals and fruit for Cardinal Giovan Carlo de' Medici (Mascalchi 1997, 109–10). On Van Aelst's time in Italy, see Paul 2008, 64–81, 160–78, and the essay by Paul in this catalogue.
17 On Dutch and Flemish paintings in the collection, see, respectively, Chiarini 1989 and Bodart 1977.
18 On Honthorst's works in Florence, see Chiarini 1989, 189–201; Papi 2010, 176–87.
19 See Chiarini 1989, 404–60.
20 On Giovan Carlo de' Medici's patronage and collecting, see Mascalchi 1997, 105–36. Giovan Carlo seems to have kept his better paintings in Florence in the *casino* in the via della Scala, while the greater part of his collection was in his villa di Castello. The cardinal also had private quarters in Palazzo Pitti, whose walls were decorated in the late 1650s with plaster reliefs of flowers.
21 On Leopoldo de' Medici's patronage and collecting, see Fumagalli 1997, 141–53.
22 On the interest in science at the Medici court, see Galluzzi 1980, Galluzzi 2001.
23 The discussion of Medici collecting of still lifes, with references to the ongoing interests in horticulture, in Chiarini 1997, is usefully organized by collector.
24 On Casabona, see Tongiorgi Tomasi and Garbari 1995; Tongiorgi Tomasi 2002, 37–38.
25 On Utens and the series of lunettes, see Mignani 1980; Tongiorgi Tomasi 2002, 33–34.
26 On the attribution of the Codice Casabona, with its hundreds of depictions of plants, to Fröschl, see Tongiorgi Tomasi and Garbari 1995, 39–44.
27 On art and science at the Medici court, see Tongiorgi Tomasi 2001, Tongiorgi Tomasi and Tosi 2001, Tongiorgi Tomasi 2002, Galluzzi 2001, 124–29, Hildebrecht 2004, 248–81, and Camerota and Miniati 2008.
28 On Garzoni, see Casale 1991; Tongiorgi Tomasi 2002, 75–89.
29 On Marseus's possible sojourn and his paintings in Florence, see Chiarini 1989, 262–95; Steensma 1999, 84–87; Hildebrecht 2004, 57–59. Cosimo III was ultimately the most prolific collector of Van Schrieck's paintings, owning nine in total.
30 On Van Kessel's paintings in Florence, see Bodart 1977, 164–73.
31 For the text, see Di Lorenzo 1991, 327–28; for an English translation, see Stechow 1989, 8–9.
32 Doni 1549, 16v: "La gratia & pratica de uelluti o altri drappi di seta anchora che la dependa da pa[n]ni & ueli detti poco fà, per esserci una diligente pratica di colori; sopra tutti gli altri maestri gli dipingon bene i Fiaminghi in modo che gli fanno parer naturalißimi: tanto che i loro finti broccati o rasi ingannano l'huomo. Perche in queste cose di leggier disegno gl'oltramontani ci aplicano piu l'ingegno, & la pratica, che gl'italiani non fanno; onde si dice in prouerbio, che gl'hanno il ceruello nelle mani." For an English translation, see Nuttall 2004, 36. As Torreson 1981, 69, points out, the comment is spoken in Doni's dialogue by Paolo Pino, to whom Doni himself is opposed in some theoretical matters.
33 Trans. Agoston 2005, 1175.
34 See especially Agoston 2005.
35 "[H]a mostrato e mostra di essere veramente valent'uomo, e d'aver bene appreso la maniera italiana" (quoted by Torresan 1981, 91; see also p. 66).
36 This point is made repeatedly by Torresan 1981.
37 For the text and an alternative translation, see Roskill 1968, 120–21; see also Torresan 1981, 70–71.
38 The story is recounted by Goldberg 1983, 194. See also Naumann 1981, 1:185. On Cosimo and Van Mieris, see Naumann 1981, 1:27–30; Buvelot 2005, 19, 20.
39 Goldberg 1983, p. 362 n. 55: "Tutta questa composizione desidera che sia pittorescamente espressa nella più vaga maniera dal Sig. Ciro in un disegno da potersi mandare in Olanda solo per mostrare il concetto, già che colà non vagliano molto in ciò."
40 Goldberg 1983, p. 362 n. 55: "Il Ser*mo* Granduca ha pensiero di farsi fare in Olanda un quadro di devozione dal Pittore Miris, che ha il suo forte nelle figure piccole estremamente finite, e vale sopratutto nella più esquisita imitazione del vero."
41 Goldberg 1983, p. 363 n. 56: Giovacchino Guasconi, who from Amsterdam arranged commissions of Dutch pictures for Cosimo, reported: "Il medesimo Miris mi ha detto che intraprendendo esso asimile opera questa non riescirà in perfezione secondo le altre sue pitture poi che la sua vocazione è di dipignere cosa che con li suoi occhi ne possa vedere il naturale non havendo mai costumato metter il pennello in figura o altro che habbia havuto aprendere cognizione da altri ritratti o stampe poi che in tal maniera non vagliano." See also Geisenheimer 1911, p. 55.
42 On the painting and the documents related to it (as well as an unsolicited but well-received painting of *The Old Lover* sent by Van Mieris to Florence in this period), see Naumann 1981, 1:29, 176–85, 2:111–12; Chiarini 1989, 320–22; Buvelot 2005, 200–03.
43 In a letter of 9 November 1652, quoted by Mascalchi 1997, 128–29: "Il maneggio dei colori condotto con tanta morbidezza, che par che vada del pari con la natura." Giovanni Battista Passeri described Piermattei as the agent of Mattia de' Medici (probably mistaking the identity of the Medici), living in the Palazzo Medici in Rome (Passeri 1934, 390). See also Silvia Mascalchini in Chiarini 1997, 113.