



March 1, 2007



Giovanna Garzoni, *Ceramic Bowl with Pears and Morning Glories* (1651–62). Private collection, Silvano Lodi, Campione d'Italia.



Vase of Flowers (early 17th c.). Stone inlay in black marble. Museo dell'Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence.



Cristoforo Munari, *Still Life with Porcelain Vases, Flute, Books and Oranges* (1706–13). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Detail.



Bartolomeo Bimbi, *Espalier of Citrus Fruits* (1715). Medici Villa, Museo della Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano.

EXHIBITION FACT SHEET

• Press Release

Title: **Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections**

When: April 1–May 27, 2007

Description: Merchants, bankers, rulers, patrons of the arts and sciences, and extraordinary collectors—the Medicis dominated the political and cultural life of Florence from the 15th to the mid-18th centuries. This exhibition features 38 sumptuous still-life paintings and four mosaics collected or commissioned by Medici rulers from Cosimo II to the last Grand Duke of Tuscany. Known in Italian as *natura morta*, these works depict all forms of nature—flowers, fruits, vegetables and animals (dead and alive)—often arranged with domestic items such as bottles, books and musical instruments.

Companion show: Ukrainian-born artist Shimon Okshteyn gives the still life a different, often amusing, decidedly contemporary spin. In *After Lifes*, he reinterprets nine classic works in monochrome, then adds colorful hand-made frames accented with found objects.

Special events: Exhibition Party Saturday, March 31, 8–11 pm; lecture by Georgina Wilsenach of Christie's, New York (Thursday, April 26, 7 pm). *For details see attached releases.*

Hours: Wednesday–Sunday 11 am–5 pm and Thursday until 9 pm. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Admission: \$7; college students with ID and senior citizens, \$5; children 6–18, \$2. Reduced admission Thursdays 5–9 pm, \$3. Always free to MAG members, UR students and children 5 and under. Reduced general admission, \$2, Thursdays from 5–9. **Free admission Sunday, April 1.**

Credits: *Natura Morta* was organized by Contemporanea Progetti, Florence, Italy, in collaboration with The Trust for Museum Exhibitions, Washington, DC. In Rochester, it is made possible with public funds secured by New York State Senator James S. Alesi, with additional support from the Gallery Council of the Memorial Art Gallery, the Gouvernet Arts Fund of Rochester Area Community Foundation, and Michael and Joanna Grosodonia. *After Lifes* is sponsored by Deanne Molinari.

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March 1, 2007

• **Press Release**

**STILL-LIFE PAINTINGS FROM THE MEDICI COLLECTIONS
OPENS APRIL 1 AT MAG**



ROCHESTER, NY – A major traveling exhibition of still-life paintings from the famed Medici family collections opens at the Memorial Art Gallery on April 1, 2007.

Organized by the Trust for Museum Exhibitions in collaboration with Contemporanea Progetti of Florence, Italy, the exhibition brings together 42 Renaissance and Baroque still lifes collected or commissioned by Medici rulers from Cosimo II to the last Grand Duke of Tuscany. Known in Italian as *natura morta*, these sumptuous works depict all forms of nature—flowers, fruits, vegetables and animals (dead and alive)—often arranged with domestic items such as bottles, books and musical instruments.

Most are by such Italian artists as Cristoforo Munari, Bartolomeo Ligozzi, Giovanna Garzoni and Bartolomeo Bimbi, who was considered Italy’s foremost still-life painter in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Others represented in the exhibition are still-life specialists from northern Europe: the Dutchmen Willem van Aelst and Otto Marseus van Schrieck and the Flemish artist Jan van Kessel.

Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections remains on view through May 27.

Companion show (Rochester only)

In Rochester, *After Lifes: Recent Work* by Shimon Okshteyn gives the still life a different, often amusing, decidedly contemporary spin. In this companion show, Ukrainian-born artist Shimon Okshteyn reinterprets nine classic works in monochrome, then adds colorful hand-made frames accented with found objects.



About the Medicis

Merchants, bankers, rulers, patrons of the arts and sciences, and extraordinary collectors—the Medicis dominated the political and cultural life of Florence from the 15th to the mid-18th centuries.

The first of the Medici collectors was Ferdinando I de’ Medici in the late 1500s. Subsequent collectors, particularly the sons of Cosimo II de’ Medici, would prove to be ardent patrons of the still-life painters who sojourned at the Medici court. Among this group were Giovanna Garzoni, known for

TOP: Bartolomeo Bimbi, *Cauliflower and Wild Radishes* (1706). Museo di Storia Naturale, University of Florence, Sezione Botanica, Florence.
ABOVE RIGHT: Shimon Okshteyn, *Still Life with Flowers and Curtain* (2005). Courtesy the artist and Stefan Stux Gallery, New York

more...

her delicate tempera paintings on parchment, and Bartolomeo Bimbi, known for the botanical exactitude of his large canvas studies of fruit. Cardinal Giovan Carlo de' Medici proved to be a particularly enlightened patron and collector, commissioning numerous works by the Dutch still-life specialist, Willem van Aelst, who during his stay in Florence greatly influenced his contemporaries by the almost hypnotic realism of his paintings.

These collections demonstrate the richness of form and color that can be said to have “exploded” during the artistic period known as the Baroque—a period in which Florence remained one of the most important art centers of Europe.

The works in *Natura Morta* were selected from more than 600 Medici still-life paintings in Florentine museums by two art historians associated with the Galleria Palatina of the Palazzo Pitti—former director Marco Chiarini and vice director Stefano Casci.

Evolution of a genre

In Italy, the phrase *natura morta* was coined in the mid-1700s to refer to a genre that was already well-known in northern Europe. Early Flemish artists, who excelled in the patient, minute investigation of reality, established the details of everyday life as a worthy pictorial subject.

Initially, *natura morta* was considered less noble than *natura vivente*, which focused on the human figure, particularly the masculine nude in mythical action. But while princely collectors still favored paintings of heroic pursuits, still lifes gained acceptance from the wealthy classes who acquired them to adorn the interiors of their palaces. In the hands of such masterful artists as Bartolomeo Bimbi, *natura morta* was soon transformed into one of the major genres of the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century.

Credits

Natura Morta was organized by Contemporanea Progetti, Florence, Italy, in collaboration with The Trust for Museum Exhibitions, Washington, DC. In Rochester, it is made possible with public funds secured by New York State Senator James S. Alesi, with additional support from the Gallery Council of the Memorial Art Gallery, the Gouvernet Arts Fund of Rochester Area Community Foundation, and Michael and Joanna Grosodonia.

After Lives: Recent Work by Shimon Okshteyn is sponsored by Deanne Molinari.

Memorial Art Gallery hours and admission

The Gallery is open Wednesday-Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm and Thursday until 9 pm.

General admission is \$7; college students with ID and senior citizens, \$5; children 6–18, \$2; always free to MAG members, UR students and children 5 and under. Reduced general admission from 5 to 9 pm Thursdays is \$2. Free and open to the public Sunday, April 1.

Special events

These include an Exhibition Party (March 31); a free admission day (April 1) and a lecture by Georgina Wilsenach of Christie's, New York (April 26). *For details see attached releases.*

Itinerary

Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections opened in November 2006 at the College of William and Mary's Muscarelle Museum of Art in Williamsburg, VA and traveled next to the Museum of Fine Arts of St. Petersburg, FL. From Rochester, it continues its tour at the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, NM (June 8–August 5, 2007); Chazen Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin in Madison (August 24–October 21, 2007); and the Hyde Collection in Glens Falls, NY (Nov. 3, 2007–January 13, 2008).

Catalog

A fully-illustrated hardcover catalog of *Natura Morta*, \$38, is available at the Gallery Store.

Public website

<http://mag.rochester.edu>

Press contacts:

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Memorial Art Gallery
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

500 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14607
585-473-7720
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• Press Release

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March 1, 2007

EXHIBITION PARTY: Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections

Saturday, March 31, 8–11 pm (Patrons 6–8 pm)

MAG supporter members and above free; associate members \$8; non-members and guests \$15; advance tickets required*

Sponsored by the Democrat and Chronicle

Be among the first to see Renaissance and Baroque treasures from the famed Medici Collections and enjoy live music and entertainment throughout the Gallery:

- In the M&T Bank Ballroom, dance or just listen to high-powered, horn-driven music by nine-piece band **Atlas**.
- In the Vanden Brul pavilion, jam to jazz, blues and fusion with the **Artisan Trio**.
- In the Herdle Fountain Court, let your spirits soar as **Musica Spei** performs Renaissance choral works.
- In the auditorium, go back to the Medici era with lute player **Deborah Fox**.
- Help yourself to munchies, or purchase cocktails, coffee and decadent desserts served by our own Cutler's Restaurant.

* For recorded information call 473-7720, ext. 3510. Tickets for nonmembers only are also available at Wegmans Customer Service Counters (surcharge applies).

Special thanks to our community partner, the Italian American Community Center.

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PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:
Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections

LECTURE

Thursday, April 26, 7 pm (free with Gallery admission)

Georgina Wilsenach, vice president and specialist in Old Master paintings at Christie's, New York

GUIDED EXHIBITION TOURS

Sunday, April 1: 1, 2 and 3 pm (free admission)

Fridays and Sundays, April 6–May 27: 2 pm (free with Gallery admission)

GALA DINNER

Sunday, April 22

Come to the Gallery for wine and antipasti, music and tours of *Natura Morta*, followed by a festive dinner at Mario's Italian Steakhouse and Catering.

Sponsored by the Gallery Council of the Memorial Art Gallery. in cooperation with Casa Italiana, Nazareth College. For ticket prices and times, contact Joyce Tesch at 473-7720, ext. 3014 (jtesch@mag.rochester.edu).

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• Press Release

CHECKLIST
Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections
April 1–May 27, 2007

Willem van Aelst
Dutch, 1626/27–active in Amsterdam
until 1683
Game Birds, 1652
Oil on canvas
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Anonymous painter (Tuscan?)
of the 17th century
Flowers in a Landscape, before 1663
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Basket of Flowers, late 17th century
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Bunch of Grapes from Ponte alla Badia,
1716
Oil on canvas
Museo di Storia Naturale, University of
Florence, Sezione Botanica, Florence

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Cauliflower and Wild Radishes, 1706
Oil on canvas
Museo di Storia Naturale, University of
Florence, Sezione Botanica, Florence

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Espalier of Citrus Fruits, 1715
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Garland with Swallows, about 1690–95
Oil on canvas
Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Musical Instruments, early 18th century
Oil on canvas
Galleria dell'Accademia, Museo degli
Strumenti Musicali, Florence

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Thicket of Wheat, 1713
Oil on canvas
Museo di Storia Naturale, University of
Florence, Sezione Botanica, Florence

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Two Pear Tree Branches with Hoopoe,
1717
Oil on canvas
Museo di Storia Naturale, University of
Florence, Sezione Botanica, Florence

Bartolomeo Bimbi
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Vase of Flowers, about 1695–97
Oil on canvas
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Bartolomeo Bimbi and assistant
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
June and July Pears, early 18th century
Oil on canvas
Private collection, Art Consulting, Milan

Bartolomeo Bimbi and assistant
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
August Pears, early 18th century
Oil on canvas
Private collection, Art Consulting, Milan

Bartolomeo Bimbi and Vittorio Crosten
Italian, Settignano 1648–Florence 1723
Documented 1663–1703
Giant Carnations, 1699
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano

Felice Boselli
Italian, Piacenza 1650–Parma 1732
Fish, about 1710
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano

Margherita Caffi
Italian, Milan (?) 1650–1710
Vase of Flowers with Sculpted Head,
about 1686
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano

Margherita Caffi
Italian, Milan (?) 1650–1710
Vines of Flowers, 1680s
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano

Niccolò Cassana and Giovanni Agostino
Cassana
Italian, Venice 1659–London 1713
Italian, Venice (?) about 1658–Genoa 1720
The Cook, 1707
Oil on canvas
Galleria degli Uffizi, Corridoio Vasariano,
Florence

- Giovan Battista Crescenzi (?)
Italian, Rome 1577–Madrid 1635
Fruit, Vegetables and Mushrooms,
before 1625
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano
- Jacopo da Empoli (workshop)
Italian, no date
Fish and Crustaceans, about 1630
Oil on canvas
Museo Bardini, Collezione Corsi, Florence
- Jacopo da Empoli (workshop)
Italian, no date
Lamb, Eggs and Chickens in a Basket,
about 1630
Oil on canvas
Museo Bardini, Collezione Corsi, Florence
- Giacomo Fardella di Calvello
Italian, Palermo (?), active in Florence,
second half of the 17th century
Fish and Lobsters, 1684
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano
- Giacomo Fardella di Calvello
Italian, Palermo (?), active in Florence,
second half of the 17th century
*Flowers, Vegetables, Game and Fish with
Figures*, about 1687–88
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano
- Giovanna Garzoni
Italian, Ascoli Piceno 1600–Rome 1670
*Ceramic Bowl with Pears and Morning
Glories*, 1651–62
Tempera on parchment
Private collection, Silvano Lodi,
Campione d'Italia
- Grand Ducal Workshops
Italian, 17th century
Vases of Flowers (Pair), early 17th century
Soft stone inlay set in black marble,
framed with alabaster and verde antico
marble
Museo dell'Opificio delle Pietre Dure,
Florence
- Grand Ducal Workshops (drawings by
Giovan Battista Foggini?)
Parrots, Birds and Flowers (Pair),
early 18th century
Hard stones, and frames in ebony and
gilded metal
Galleria degli Uffizi, Collezione Feroni,
Florence
- Nicola van Houbraken
Italian, Messina about 1660–Livorno 1723
Fruits and Vegetables in a Landscape, 1717
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano
- Jan van Kessel
Belgian, Antwerp 1626–1679
*Delft Porcelain Bowl, Flowers, Fruit and
Vegetables (Pair)*, about 1650
Oil on copper
Museo Civico, Prato
- Filippo di Liagno, called Filippo
Napoletano
Italian, Rome about 1589–1629
Two Citrons, 1618
Oil on canvas
Museo di Storia Naturale, University of
Florence, Sezione Botanica, Florence
- Bartolomeo Ligozzi
Italian, Florence about 1631/39–1695
Flowers, Fruit and a Parrot, 1688
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano
- Bartolomeo Ligozzi
Italian, Florence about 1631/39–1695
Vase of Flowers, 1670s–80s
Oil on canvas
Private collection, Giampaolo Fioretto,
Florence
- Cristoforo Munari
Italian, Reggio Emilia 1667–Pisa 1720
*Still Life with Porcelain Vases, Flute,
Books and Oranges*, 1706–13
Oil on canvas
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
- Cristoforo Munari
Italian, Reggio Emilia 1667–Pisa 1720
Vases, Glass and Fruit (Pair), 1706–20
Oil on canvas
Museo Bardini, Collezione Corsi, Florence
- Cristoforo Munari (?)
Italian, Reggio Emilia 1667–Pisa 1720
*Fruit and Vegetables with a Dog and
a Cat*, 1706–13
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano
- Giuseppe Recco
Italian, Naples 1634–Alicante 1695
Fish, about 1690
Oil on canvas
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
- Andrea Scacciati
Italian, 1644–1710
Vase of Flowers, 1687
Oil on canvas
Villa del Poggio Imperiale, Florence
- Otto Marseus van Schrieck
Dutch, Nimega about 1619–Amsterdam
1678
*Sottobosco (Undergrowth) with Snake and
Butterflies*, 1652–57
Oil on canvas
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
- Giovanni Stanchi
Italian, about 1608–after 1686
Garland of Roses with Birds, 1686
Oil on canvas
Villa Medicea (Medici Villa), Museo della
Natura Morta, Poggio a Caiano



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• **Press Release**

March 1, 2007

**OKSHTEYN’S “AFTER LIFES” OFFER THOUGHT-PROVOKING
COUNTERPOINT TO MEDICI STILL LIFES**



An exhibition of contemporary still lifes by Ukrainian-born artist Shimon Okshteyn opens April 1 at the Memorial Art Gallery and remains on view through May 27.

In *After Lifes*, Okshteyn reinterprets nine classic paintings in monochrome, then adds colorful hand-made frames accented with found objects. The monumental works offer a thought-provoking counterpoint to the art in the much larger companion show, *Natura Morta: Still Life Painting and the Medici Collections*. Indeed one of the works (pictured at left)

is a reinterpretation of Filippo Napolitano’s *Two Citrons*, which is included in *Natura Morta*.

After Lifes: Recent Work by Shimon Okshteyn is sponsored by Deanne Molinari.

Celebrating overindulgence

“Okshteyn’s earlier paintings of objects that are rapidly disappearing from everyday life staggered the viewer with virtuoso technique and magnificent proportions,” says MAG director of exhibition Marie Via, who selected one of them (of a derby hat) for the Gallery’s 2000 exhibition *New Realism for a New Millennium*. “The ‘after lifes’ venture a step further, mourning not only what is lost to us but confronting our own trivialization of beauty and celebration of overindulgence.”

In Okshteyn’s loving recreations of 17th-century masterpieces, it’s not just the paintings that are testaments to excess and abundance. That duty also falls to the frame, which is no longer just the container of the message but has become the message itself. The fruits and flowers that embellish these frames are unabashedly artificial, as are the birds, bees and butterflies. Even the paint spilling onto one of the canvases turns out not to be real.

About the artist

Born in 1951 in Chernovtsky, Ukraine, Shimon Okshteyn received a BFA from Odessa Art Institute. In 1979 he emigrated to the United States, where he settled in Springfield, MA. Since 1989 he has lived and worked in New York City and Southampton, NY.

In 1997 his work was selected for the Biennale Internazionale Dell’Arte Contemporanea in Florence, Italy, and in 2001 he was invited to be a visiting artist in the printmaking department at Washington University in St. Louis.

Okshteyn’s work has been exhibited around the world and is in museum collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Russian Art in Nizhiny Novgorod, Russia. Most recently, he had a solo show at Stux Gallery, New York City, and a retrospective at the State Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Still Life with Two Citrons (2005) courtesy the artist and Stefan Stux Gallery, New York.



• Press Release

CHECKLIST
After Lives: New Work by Shimon Okshteyn
April 1–May 27, 2007

Works by Shimon Okshteyn
(b. 1951, Chernovtsy, Ukraine)

Basket with Broken Glasses, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
86 x 108 inches
Private collection

Basket with Peaches and Grapes, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
82 x 89 inches
Courtesy the artist and Stefan Stux
Gallery, New York

*Fruit Still Life with Peaches, Grapes and
Apricots*, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
52 x 41½ inches
Courtesy the artist and Stefan Stux
Gallery, New York

Still Life, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
110 x 86 inches
Courtesy the artist and Stefan Stux
Gallery, New York

Still Life with Flowers and Curtain, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
44 x 54 inches
Courtesy the artist and Stefan Stux
Gallery, New York

*Still Life with Flowers, Cat and
Mousetrap*, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
108 x 86 inches
Private collection

Still Life with Fruit and Lobster, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
98 x 100 inches
Private collection

*Still Life with Lemon, Oranges
and Glass of Wine*, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
92 x 80 inches
Private collection

Still Life with Two Citrons, 2005
Graphite and charcoal on canvas with
mixed media frame
44 x 52 inches
Courtesy the artist and Stefan Stux
Gallery, New York

All sizes include frames.