

Gallery

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Private Patronage in Italy, 1600-1700

While the papacy was financing an ambitious array of public projects in 17th-century Rome, such as Bernini's colonnade for St. Peter's Basilica, a market was also emerging among private patrons for smaller, more personal works of art. Members of the papal entourage, as well as the rising classes of bankers, merchants, and civil servants, were clamoring to assemble their own collections with art by the leading painters of the day. Though Francesco Albani had executed several large altarpieces as a younger artist in Bologna, he earned a reputation as a painter of cabinet pictures during his mature years in Rome. Pietro da Cortona was known for his magnificent fresco cycles, but he also produced easel paintings for privileged clients. The archaizing painter Sassoferrato built a career almost exclusively on commissions for pictures of moderate dimensions for private residences.

The diverse backgrounds and interests of the new patrons also permitted a wider range of subject matter than was customary in the art of Counter-Reformation Italy. Small pictures often depicted tales from Greek and Roman mythology, and religious pieces took on a more devotional and intimate scale, as seen in the paintings of Carlo Dolce and Francesco Furini. Such works were also coveted by collectors outside Italy, such as Lord Arundel, a British diplomat under King Charles I, whose collection formed the foundation of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.



Carlo Dolci, attributed to
Italian, 1616-1687, active in Florence

The "Blue" Madonna, c. 1670

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 136

In this painting the popular subject of the Madonna of Sorrows, or *Mater Dolorosa*, is endowed with a physical presence and simplicity that has affected many pious viewers. The combination of sweetness and melancholy is typical of the religious pathos of Carlo Dolci's works. The artist was particularly well known for his paintings of solitary figures, as seen in this work. His skill as a portraitist informed his religious pictures, as his religious figures frequently have the feeling of psychological portraits. This personal approach to devotional painting echoed the demands of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) for clear, decipherable religious art.



Pier Francesco Mola

Italian, 1612-1666, active in Rome and Bologna

Portrait of a Young Man, c. 1650-55

Oil on canvas

Museum purchase, 1972, SN 905

Though drawing on Renaissance precedents by artists such as Titian and Raphael, this portrait of an unidentified young man reflects Mola's predilection for the dramatic lighting of the High Baroque. In this work, he employs a limited palette of deep earth tones and bright highlights, relying on the contrast between light and shadow to draw attention to the sitter's face, clothing, and hands. Mola trained in Rome in the studio of Giuseppe Cesari and later worked with Francesco Albani in Bologna before returning to Rome, where he enjoyed a successful career.



Carlo Dolci

Italian, 1616-1687, active in Florence

Saint John Writing the Book of Revelation, c. 1647

Oil on copper

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 137

This small easel painting of St. John the Evangelist on the Island of Patmos illustrates the detailed softness characteristic of Carlo Dolci's style. The saint gazes upward, appealing for inspiration as he pens the Book of Revelation. His ecstatic expression, dewy eyes, and open mouth are typical of Dolci's figures. The eagle at the right of the painting represents St. John's visionary ability – it was believed to be the only creature that could gaze directly into the sun and therefore became an attribute of the saint.

Dolci's images often combine vivid palettes with an almost Netherlandish attention to detail.



Giuseppe Cesari, called Il Cavalieri d'Arpino

Italian, 1568-1640, active in Rome

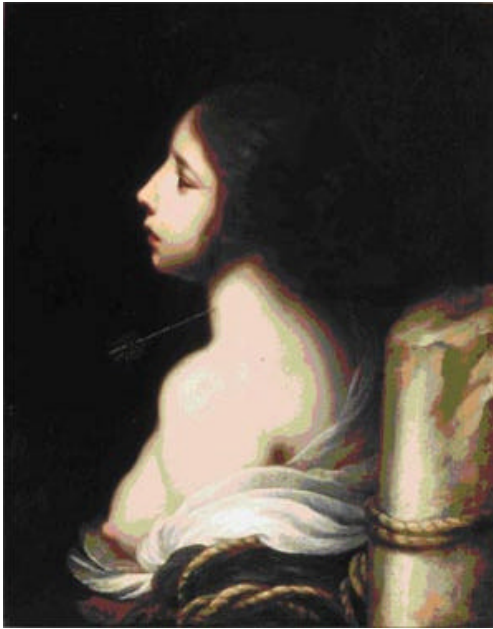
Perseus and Andromeda, 1620-30

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 108

Giuseppe Cesari enjoyed decades of papal patronage and was the principal painter to Pope Clement VIII, making him one of the most successful artists in the early decades of 17th-century Rome. A renowned fresco painter, Cesari also produced a series of smaller cabinet paintings of mythological subjects for private patrons. This work depicts a scene from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which Perseus frees Andromeda, the daughter of Cassiopeia, from death at the hands of Ceto, the sea monster who tormented the kingdom of Ethiopia. The mythological subject was among Cesari's

favorites, as he painted several versions throughout his career.



Francesco Furini

Italian, 1603-1646, active in Florence and Rome

Saint Christina, c. 1640

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 135

Francesco Furini's reputation for painting rapturous images of female nudes is reflected in this depiction of Saint Christina, a 3rd-century martyr from Tuscany. Upon defacing her father's gold and silver pagan idols, the fragments of which she gave to the poor, she was subjected to various tortures before being killed with arrows. Saint Christina is shown bound, with an arrow through her neck suggesting martyrdom, but little else distracts the viewer from this poetic image of ideal beauty. By focusing on the softness of the

flesh and hair, Furini secularizes the ostensibly religious image.



Giovanni Battista Salvi, called Sassoferrato

Italian, 1609-1685, active in Rome

Madonna and Child, c. 1645-55

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 127

Sassoferrato specialized in extremely polished renderings of the Madonna and Child. These works are generally characterized by highly saturated colors, tightly contained figural groupings, and sculptural treatment of drapery. This painting style was supported by the Catholic Church during the Counter-Reformation. Reminiscent of the Madonnas painted by Raphael, Sassoferrato's works also appealed to a nostalgia for the symmetry and clarity of Renaissance painting. A similar

painting of a Madonna and Child is visible in the background of Sassoferrato's *Portrait of a Cardinal*, displayed in the adjacent gallery.



Domenico Gargiulo, called Micco Spadaro

Italian, 1609/10-c. 1675, active in Naples

Bathsheba at Her Bath, c. 1650-55

Oil on canvas

Gift of Asbjorn R. Lunde, 1976, SN 955

From the distant balcony King David watches Bathsheba, the wife of his general Uriah, as her attendants help her bathe. After seducing Bathsheba, the ruler sent Uriah to die at the front lines of a battle.

David and Bathsheba's child was eventually killed as God's punishment. Recorded in the Old Testament Book of Samuel, the story shows the human frailties that even great leaders face. It has been suggested that other artists collaborated with Gargiulo on this work. The figures of Bathsheba and her attendants were most likely painted by Bernardo Cavallino, a Neapolitan painter who frequently depicted Old Testament scenes.



Domenico Gargiulo, called Micco Spadaro

Italian, 1609/10-c. 1675, active in Naples

The Israelites Celebrating David's Return, c. 1650

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 155

Before a tumultuous evening sky of peach and purple tones, the youthful David displays the head of Goliath as the

Israelites celebrate their miraculous delivery from the enemy. The intense chiaroscuro, visible on the faces of the figures in the foreground, is characteristic of 17th-century Neapolitan painting. The elegantly posed figures may reveal the influence of French engravings. The impressive landscape in the background resembles those of Gargiulo's contemporary, Salvator Rosa, with whom he studied in Naples. This work, along with the adjacent *Bathsheba at Her Bath*, may have been part of a series of paintings devoted to the life of David.



Filippo Lauri

Italian, 1623-1694, active in Rome

Saint Jerome, c. 1645-55

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 151

Saint Jerome (c. 347-420) kneels before a modest crucifix of two twigs joined together, with a skull and book in the foreground. Like generations of artists before him, Lauri emphasized the landscape in his depiction of the saint. The windswept setting illustrates the beauty of untamed nature, while Jerome's bare, dirty feet and outstretched hands indicate his humility. Lauri was part of a circle of painters in Rome, including Claude

Lorraine and Salvator Rosa, who elevated landscape to an expressive device, allowing it to convey specific mood rather than merely serve as a backdrop.



Francesco Albani

Italian, 1578-1660, active in Bologna, Mantua, and Rome

Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness,

c. 1600-06

Oil on copper

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 115

Albani began his career in Rome as Annibale Caracci's assistant and adopted his master's predilection for situating his works in impressive landscapes. For centuries, the subject of St. John the Baptist in the wilderness, where the saint lived in seclusion until emerging to perform baptisms in the Jordan River, had provided artists with an opportunity to showcase their skills in landscape painting. This work is painted on copper, a popular support for smaller cabinet paintings in the 16th and 17th centuries.



Pietro da Cortona

Italian, 1596-1669, active in Rome and Florence

***Hagar and the Angel*, c. 1637-38**

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 132

Though Pietro da Cortona is known as one of the greatest practitioners of the animated and dynamic High Baroque style, this scene from the Book of Genesis is strikingly serene. The

artist shows the figure of Abraham's abandoned slave, Hagar, and her thirsting son, Ishmael, in idealized, classical poses. Like his contemporary Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Pietro was a celebrated architect as well as an artist. His most famous architectural design was Santa Maria della Pace in Rome, a commission from Pope Alexander VII, and his ceiling fresco in the Palazzo Barberini is considered one of the triumphs of Roman Baroque art.