



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.

Information: Public relations office (585) 473-7720 / TTY (585) 473-6152  
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<http://mag.rochester.edu>



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 Lifes: 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:**

Public relations office (585) 473-7720 / TTY (585) 473-6152

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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

Press contact: Andrea Allen/Shirley Wersinger  
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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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March 1, 2007

**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).*

# # #



• 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 Chernovtsy, 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.*