Finding aid for the Stefano Della Bella etchings, circa 1642-1650

Finding aid prepared by Anne-Marie Schaaf.
Descriptive Summary
Title: Stefano Della Bella etchings
Date (inclusive): circa 1642-1650
Number: P830003
Creator/Collector: Della Bella, Stefano, 1610-1664
Physical Description: 35.0 prints (1 box)
Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688
(310) 440-7390


Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.

Language: Collection material is in Italian

Biographical/Historical Note
Stefano Della Bella was born and died in Florence. His father, Francesco Della Bella, was a sculptor in Giambologna's workshop; and his brothers followed the trades of goldsmith, sculptor, and painter. He first worked in gold-and metalsmiths' workshops, then studied painting with Cesare Dandini, and finally studied etching, which became his chosen career. Supported by Don Lorenzo de Medici (d.1640), he worked in Florence from 1633 to 1639, with a series of trips to Rome to study from the antique. In 1639 he went to Paris, where he etched plates sold by François Langlois (called Ciartres, 1589-1647), Israël Henriet (ca1590-1661), and Pierre I Mariette (1603-57). He also received official commissions from Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin. He returned to Florence in 1650 after French hostility to Mazarin erupted in the Fronde and extended to all Italians. With the exception of a single trip to Rome, he remained in Florence until his death but continued to send plates and prints to Paris publishers. Retained by Prince Mattias de Medici, Della Bella gave drawing lessons to Mattias's nephew Cosimo III, the son of Grand Duke Ferdinand II (1610-70).

Throughout his life, Della Bella drew in the open air, reporting on important events and places and rarely copying others' compositions. He made over a thousand prints and thousands of drawings. He etched most of his plates himself, providing plates for his Medici patrons and Parisian commercial publishers. He etched subjects from the Bible and lives of the saints, portraits, and allegories. His genre scenes included images of animals, children, and exotic figures; and views of public life, rural scenes, marines, hunting, and military scenes. He represented actual places in topographic plans and views and actual events such as festivals or ceremonies. His ornament prints included ornaments for theses, frontispieces, vignettes, drawing aids, games, and rebuses; his delicate asymmetries, sense of fantasy, and inventiveness prefigure the rococo of a century later.

Access
Open for use by qualified researchers.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Stefano Della Bella etchings, ca. 1642-1650, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Accession no. P830003. http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa98r5

Acquisition Information
Acquired in 1983, originally part of the Besterman collection.

Processing History
Anne-Marie Schaaf processed and rehoused this collection, removing all prints from acidic mats. The finding aid was completed in March 1996.

Scope and Content of Collection
From Della Bella’s extensive oeuvre, this collection consists of merely four suites of etchings, all primarily decorative and all etched by Della Bella himself. *Agreable diversité de figures* depicts genre scenes of people and animals in France, mostly in rural settings (11 prints). The two suites of ornament prints depict fantastic vases (*Raccolta di vasi diversi*, 6 prints) and panels of grotesques (*Ornamenti o grotesche*, 12 prints). The final set depicts the Medici Villa Pratolino and its gardens near Florence, designed by Bernardo Buontalenti and constructed 1569-86 (6 prints).

These prints were part of the art books collection of Theodore Besterman (1904-1976).

**Arrangement note**

The prints are arranged in their 4 respective suites.

**Subjects - Corporate Bodies**

Parco mediceo di Pratolino (Pratolino, Italy)

**Subjects - Topics**

Decoration and ornament, Baroque

Gardens--Italy--Pictorial works--Early works to 1800

**Genres and Forms of Material**

Etchings--France--17th century

Etchings--Italy--17th century

Prints--France--17th century

Prints--Italy--17th century

**To request an item:**

*Title of suite*. Publisher, date.

State of prints.

Number of plates. Measurements.

Bibliographic reference(s).

Notes.

Former Rare Book Number.

Titles are listed exactly as they are rendered on the prints. Supplied titles are in brackets.

Della Bella is the designer and etcher, and all entries are etchings.

Publication information is taken directly from the prints and from bibliographic information.

All measurements are in centimeters. For suites or pairs of prints, only one, usually the title page or the first print, has been measured. Pl. = platemark; Sh. = sheet. Al. = album page.


**Bibliography**


Folder 1  
**Agreable diversité de figures**  
Scope and Content Note  

Folder 2  
**Raccolta di vasi diversi**  
Scope and Content Note  

Folder 3  
**Ornamenti o grotesche**  
Scope and Content Note  
[Paris, 1648]. First state. 12 plates including title. Sh. 16.9 x 6.8; Al. 28.9 x 42.5. Vesme 1003-1014. Berlin Kat. 573. Guilmard, p.316. Three prints mounted on each album page. Formerly R 433.

Folder 4  
**[Gardens of Villa Pratolino]**  
Scope and Content Note  
n.p., n.d. [ca. 1650]. First state, except Vesme 839, which is second state. 6 plates. Pl. 25 x 36.6; Sh. 26.4 x 38.4. Vesme 838-843. Formerly R 434.