

**CHAZEN MUSEUM OF ART**  
University of Wisconsin–Madison  
800 University Avenue  
Madison, WI 53706

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 10, 2007

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Digital images can be found at [http://www.chazen.wisc.edu/pr\\_pictures.asp](http://www.chazen.wisc.edu/pr_pictures.asp)

**Exhibition of Medici Still Lives at Chazen**  
**On view August 25–October 21, 2007, Galleries VI & VII**  
**Closing Benefit, *A Medici Masquerade*, Friday, October 19, 6–8 p.m.**

The Chazen Museum of Art is pleased to host *Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections*, a touring exhibition of forty-three still lifes that reflect the tastes and collecting habits of the famous Italian family in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The works will be on view August 25 through October 21 in Brittingham Galleries VI and VII.

Wealth, power, and cultural dominance—the Medici had it all. For three centuries they ruled, shaped tastes, and set trends in banking, politics, religion, humanist ideas, art, architecture, and science. With their influence the Florentine republic thrived, and the Renaissance was born. *Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections* offers a slice of Medici life. Entrepreneurs and patrons of the arts and sciences, they began collecting still lifes to decorate their country villas. Their eclectic tastes influenced a genre that shaped studies in nature, botany, and agriculture along with artistic practice in light, form, color, composition, and realism.

Known as *natura morta* in Italian, still lifes depict—in sumptuous detail—flowers, musical instruments, fruit, vegetables, and animals. The still-life genre—practiced since the Roman times and still vital today—exploded during the Baroque period (1600s–1720s), and Florence, thanks to the Medici, was an important center of European activity.

The exhibition at the Chazen includes paintings by Bartolomeo Bimbi, Italy's foremost painter of still life in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as well as mosaics made by the Grand Ducal Workshops. Other featured artists are Cristoforo Munari, Bartolomeo Ligozzi, and Giovanna Garzoni. *Natura Morta* is a rare opportunity to see paintings from Italian institutions such as the Uffizi Gallery, the Museo della Natura Morta, and the University of Florence Museum of Natural History, as well as private collections. In addition to being patrons of local artists, the Medici also collected works from other schools of painting, both Italian and foreign, and, in particular, works of Flemish and Dutch artists such as William van Aelst, Jan van Kessel, and Nicola van Houbraken.

**Closing Benefit Event:** The Chazen will hold a closing benefit event, *A Medici Masquerade*, on October 19, 2007, from 6–8 p.m. with festive music, dancing, entertainment, delicious hors d'oeuvres from Lombardino's Restaurant, and a cash bar. Patrons can experience an evening at the Medici Court, mingle and carouse with fellow art lovers, enjoy dances by the ladies and gents from Courtly Cadenza. Fine garments and masks are encouraged—join Chazen Museum director Russell Panczenko, Tandem Press director Paula Panczenko, and other special guests dressed in period attire. (Costumes not required; masks will be available for sale in the Museum Shop).

Admission will be \$100 for members, \$125 for nonmembers. Space is limited! Reservations are required by October 8, 2007, and may be made by phone at (608) 263-2246, by fax at (608) 263-8188, online at <http://chazen.wisc.edu>, or by mail to the Chazen Museum of Art, 800 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53706. Checks should be made payable to: UW Foundation for Chazen Museum of Art. All proceeds will benefit the Chazen Museum of Art.

A Medici Masquerade is sponsored in part by J.H. Findorff & Son Inc.

### **Other Exhibition Programs**

- “*Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections, an Introduction.*” *Wednesday, September 12, 7:00 p.m., Room L160. Lecture by Gail L. Geiger, Professor and Chair of Art History, UW–Madison.* Professor Geiger, a scholar of Italian Renaissance art, will present an exhibition overview, including background on the Medici interest in botanical and other scientific materials.
- “*Northern Still-Life Painting: From Religious Symbolism to Conspicuous Consumption.*” *Thursday, September 27, 5:30 p.m., Room L150. Lecture by Jane C. Hutchison, Professor of Art History, UW–Madison.* For Medici patrons, still-life paintings unified aesthetics with science. Professor Hutchison will illustrate the origin and development of still-life painting in Northern Europe.
- “*Getting your Vegetables, the Old-Fashioned Way.*” *Tuesday, October 9, 12:30 p.m., Gallery VII. Gallery talk by James Nienhuis, Professor of Horticulture, UW–Madison.* Professor Nienhuis will discuss the history and characteristics of vegetables pictured in selected still-life paintings in *Natura Morta*.
- “*The Art of Still Life: Old Europe Meets Wisconsin Today.*” *Saturday, October 13, 12:45 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.* Family-friendly tour and drawing activity, part of *Arts Night Out*, a campus-wide event. Appropriate for children grades 2–6, accompanied by an adult.
- Forty-minute docent-led tours of *Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections*. Tuesdays, September 18 through October 16, 4 p.m.

*Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections* was organized by Contemporanea Progetti, Florence, Italy, in collaboration with the Trust for Museum Exhibitions, Washington, D.C.

*Natura Morta* is a Bassett Performance Series Event. Other generous local funding has been provided by Chazen Museum of Art Council, Brittingham Fund, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission with additional funds from the Overture Foundation, Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

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***A Medici Masquerade: Benefit Event for the Chazen Museum of Art***  
**To celebrate the exhibition *Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections***  
**Friday, October 19, 6–8 p.m.**

Wealth, power, and cultural dominance—the Medici had it all. For three centuries they ruled, shaped tastes, and set trends in banking, politics, religion, humanist ideas, art, architecture, and science. With their influence the Florentine republic thrived, and the Renaissance was born. To celebrate the exhibition *Natura Morta: Still-Life Painting and the Medici Collections*, the Chazen Museum of Art will host a special benefit event with festive music, dancing, entertainment, delicious hors d'oeuvres from Lombardino's Restaurant, and a cash bar. Patrons can experience an evening at the Medici Court, mingle and carouse with fellow art lovers, enjoy dances by the ladies and gents from Courtly Cadenza. Fine garments and masks are encouraged—join Chazen Museum director Russell Panczenko, Tandem Press director Paula Panczenko, and other special guests dressed in period attire. (Costumes not required; masks will be available for sale in the Museum Shop).

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eclectic tastes influenced a genre—practiced since the Roman times and still vital today—that shaped studies in nature, botany, and agriculture along with artistic practice in light, form, color, composition, and realism. The works will be on view August 25 through October 21 in Brittingham Galleries VI and VII.

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The Chazen Museum of Art is open Tuesdays–Fridays 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to galleries and educational events is free. The museum is located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin–Madison and is accessible to wheelchairs from the Murray Street (north) entrance. Parking is available at the city of Madison’s Lake Street and Frances Street ramps. Evening and weekend parking is also available under Grainger Hall with entrance on Brooks Street between University Avenue and Johnson streets. The Chazen will provide sign language interpreters for associated programs by three-week advance request to Anne Lambert, Curator of Education, weekdays, (608) 263-4421 (voice). Information is also available by visiting our Web site at [www.chazen.wisc.edu](http://www.chazen.wisc.edu).