

Collections Frozen in Time
Selections from the National Gallery of Art Library

February 5 – July 24, 2011





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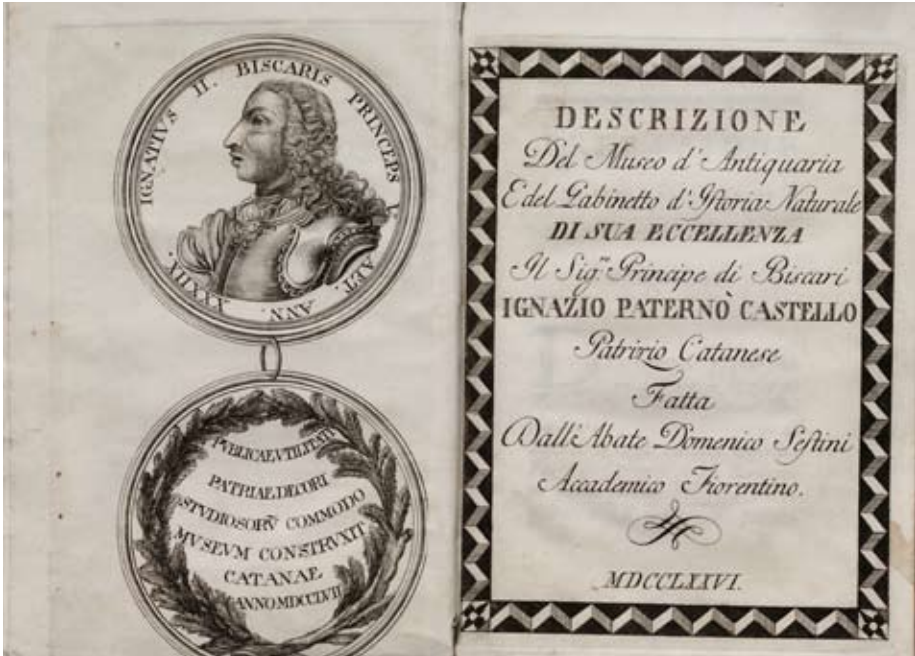
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We often think today of great collections of art, history, or nature as the province of our public institutions, but in the seventeenth century the idea of a publicly funded museum that would be open to all citizens was almost nonexistent in Europe. A museum was the collection of an individual of means and would likely be housed in a private residence, open only to those invited in. The Enlightenment ideals of the eighteenth century saw the concept of a public museum slowly begin to arise from private (largely royal) collections. Places such as the Musée du Louvre, Paris, the Prado, Madrid, and the British Museum, London, were founded on egalitarian ideals but in practice were often difficult to access and provided little guidance for the viewer. Artists and scholars were the main beneficiaries. It would not be until the nineteenth century that the values of “noblesse oblige” would emerge and bring forth public museums open to all segments of society.

Since antiquity rulers, nobles, and wealthy merchants have collected art objects, and from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century Europe saw an increase in the acquisition and selling of paintings and classical sculpture. As the field of archaeology emerged and the human past was unearthed, many sought and traded classical gems, decorative art objects such as vases, and numismatics. A trade in replicas and forgeries flourished as well. Private libraries grew, and “curiosities” ranging from scientific instruments to mineral, plant, animal, and ethnographic specimens were also popular. A single collection could include a range of these types of objects, and the cabinet, or *Wunderkammer*, was a way to demonstrate one’s wealth and sophistication.

As private collections grew, there was naturally a need to document these trophies. While documentation was often gathered when the time came to sell the collection, usually after the death of the collector by the heirs, there were those who produced catalogues for their own use and continued to update them, either annotating them by hand or publishing new editions. A printed catalogue also provided a way to promote the collection. Some collectors wrote their own catalogues; others sought noted scholars to catalogue the collection to boost its value with its cachet. In the days before photography, artists were commissioned to create lavish engravings depicting the assembled objects in fine detail. The private collection catalogue soon became as much a luxury object as the items it described.

Variarvm imaginvm a celeberrimis artificibus pictarum,
Amsterdam, c. 1660, J. Paul Getty Fund in honor of
Franklin Murphy



Some collections survive, either in private hands or at the heart of our public museums, but often the collection was dispersed over time. Some collections were sold off piecemeal. Others were adapted to new tastes as times changed — unwanted items were removed and new objects added in their place. Often the catalogues are the only record we have of the past states and original contents of these collections. They provide scholars today with valuable information about the provenance of works of art, the contexts within which these objects were viewed in the past, and the values held by earlier societies.

The National Gallery of Art Library is fortunate to own a large number of these private collection catalogues, and this focus exhibition seeks to highlight this part of our own collection. Additional selections are on view in the East Building, Ground Floor, Study Center, Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Domenico Sestini, 1750–1832, *Descrizione del museo d'antiquaria e del gabinetto d'istoria naturale di Sua Eccellenza il sigre principe di Biscari, Ignazio Paternò Castello, patrizio catanese*, Florence, 1776, David K.E. Bruce Fund

1 *Variarvm imaginvm a celeberrimis artificibus pictarum*, Amsterdam, c. 1660, J. Paul Getty Fund in honor of Franklin Murphy

This album documents some of the works in one of the most important collections of Italian paintings in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, that of the brothers Gerard Reynst (1559–1658) and Jan Reynst (1601–1646). Including paintings derived largely from the collection of Andrea Vendamin, which Gerard had purchased in Venice, this large-format catalogue is made up of thirty-four engravings by Cornelius Visscher (1629–1658), among them the one seen here after Pieter van Laer’s *The Ambush*. A number of these works were later bought by the state as part of the “Dutch Gift” presented to Charles II of England (1630–1685) on his return to power in 1660.

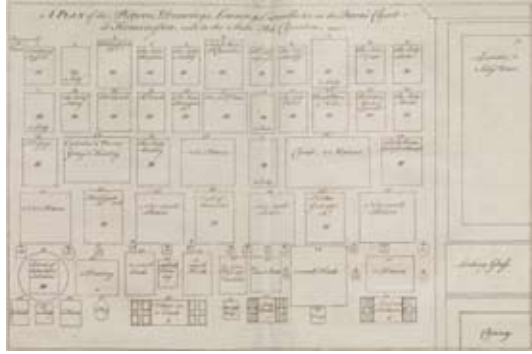


2 Hamlet Winstanley, 1698–1756, *Praenobili Iacobo Comiti Derby*, England, after 1729, A.W. Mellon Foundation New Century Fund

Hamlet Winstanley was the artist-agent for James Stanley, 10th Earl of Derby (1664–1736). He returned from Rome in 1725 with a number of paintings purchased to adorn Knowsley, Derby’s country manor in Lancashire. The prints in this volume highlight this acquisition and make this the first English collection of its kind to be documented with a series of engraved reproductions. Shown here is a print after Pietro da Cortona’s *Triumph of Bacchus*, which was destroyed in the collapse of a room at Knowsley, leaving this print as the sole visual representation of the work.



3 George Vertue, 1684–1756, *A catalogue of the collection of pictures &c. belonging to King James the Second ; to which is added A catalogue of the pictures and drawings in the closet of the late Queen Caroline, with their exact measures; and also of the principal pictures in the palace at Kensington, London, 1758*, David K.E. Bruce Fund



Unlike the other catalogues shown here, this book includes a list describing the works in the British royal collections, but it does not contain reproductions. In the section documenting the works in Queen Caroline's closet at Kensington, however, a series of charts like the one seen here is provided that map the placement of the paintings on the walls.

4 David Teniers the Younger, 1610–1690, *Le theatre des peintures*, Brussels, 1660, David K.E. Bruce Fund (see detail, cover)

An unusual book in its time, this catalogue of 244 engravings documents paintings in the collection formed by Leopold Wilhelm, Archduke of Austria (1614–1662), in Brussels when he was governing the Spanish Netherlands. David Teniers the Younger was employed as a court painter and custodian of the collection and produced the engravings. In addition to the individual works in this collection, including three that now belong to the National Gallery of Art, this final engraving shows a view of works displayed in the archduke's Brussels residence.



5 Frans van Stampart, 1675–1750, Anton Joseph von Prenner, 1698–1761, *Prodromus*, Vienna, 1735, David K.E. Bruce Fund

Leopold Wilhelm, Archduke of Austria (1614–1662), took the collection he formed in Brussels back to Vienna, where it became the core of the Hapsburg collection in the Imperial Art Gallery and eventually the Gemäldegalerie at the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Stampart and Brenner were commissioned by Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor (1685–1740), to document the collection, and they produced accurate, detailed reproductions of 920 paintings and 230 sculptures. This visual catalogue offers valuable information about the context in which the works were seen in the eighteenth century because it includes frames as well as the arrangement in which the pictures hung.



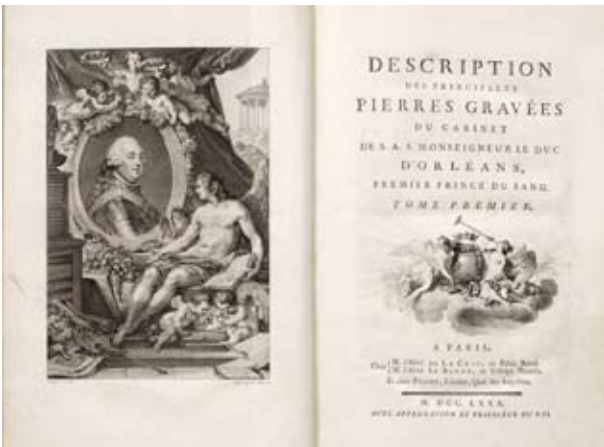


6 Paul Petau, 1568–1614, *Antiquariae supellectilis portiuncula*, Paris, 1610, David K.E. Bruce Fund

The first illustrated catalogue of antiquities published in France was that of the cabinet of Paul Petau, published by the author in a small number for private distribution. This collection was particularly strong in Egyptian artifacts, and the catalogue contains some of the earliest known illustrations of such objects.

7 François Arnaud, 1721–1784, Henri Coquille, died 1808, *Description des principales pierres gravées du cabinet de S.A.S. Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans*, Paris, 1780–1784, A.W. Mellon Foundation New Century Fund

This collection of engraved gems dating from the fourth century BC to the mid-eighteenth century was begun by Count Palatine Otto-Heinrich (1502–1559). Elisabeth-Charlotte, Princess Palatine, inherited it in 1685 and passed it on to the dukes of Orléans with her marriage to Philippe duc d'Orléans. In 1787 the collection, now numbering more than 1,500 gems, was finally sold by Louis Philippe Joseph duc d'Orléans (1747–1793) to Catherine II, Empress of Russia (1729–1796). It currently resides in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. This catalogue of the collection, produced shortly before the sale, includes 179 plates by Augustus de Saint-Aubin (1736–1807), many after Charles Nicholas Cochin (1715–1790).

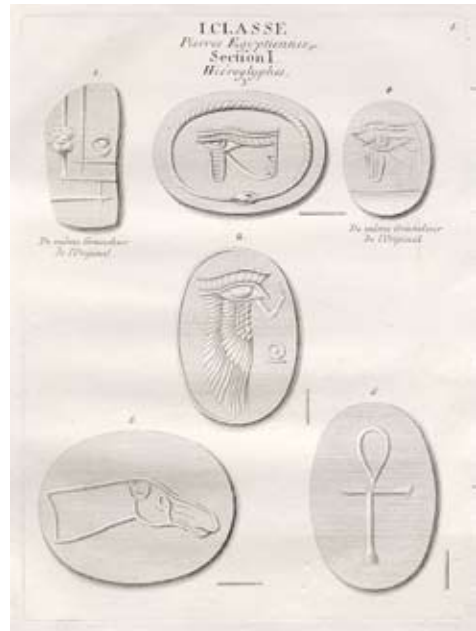


8 Johann Joachim Winckelmann, 1717–1768, *Description des pierres gravées du feu Baron de Stosch*, Florence, 1760, David K.E. Bruce Fund

On the death of Baron Philipp von Stosch (1691–1757), his heirs asked Winckelmann to catalogue his collection of antique gems and cameos with the aim of selling it. This catalogue dispelled doubts about the authenticity of the Stosch collection, and in 1765 the majority of the collection was acquired by Frederick II, King of Prussia (1712–1786). Because a catalogue with seventy engravings was published in 1724, Winckelmann did not include any plates. This copy, however, is enhanced with twenty-six engraved plates added by and annotations attributed to the Nuremberg polymath Christoph Gottlieb von Murr.

9 Friedrich Schlichtegroll, 1765–1822, *Dactyliotheca Stoschiana, oder Abbildung aller geschnittenen Steine die Ehemals der Baron Philipp von Stosch besass, die sich jetzt aber in dem Kön. Preussischen Museum befinden*, Nuremberg, 1805, David K.E. Bruce Fund

When Frederick II, King of Prussia, died, the Stosch collection was dispersed among a variety of Berlin museums. In 1797 the archaeologist and numismatist Schlichtegroll published the first volume of his work on this collection, and in 1805 he produced this second volume. This copy contains extensive annotations. Even though the identity of the annotator is unknown, the notes suggest that an amended edition was contemplated but never published.



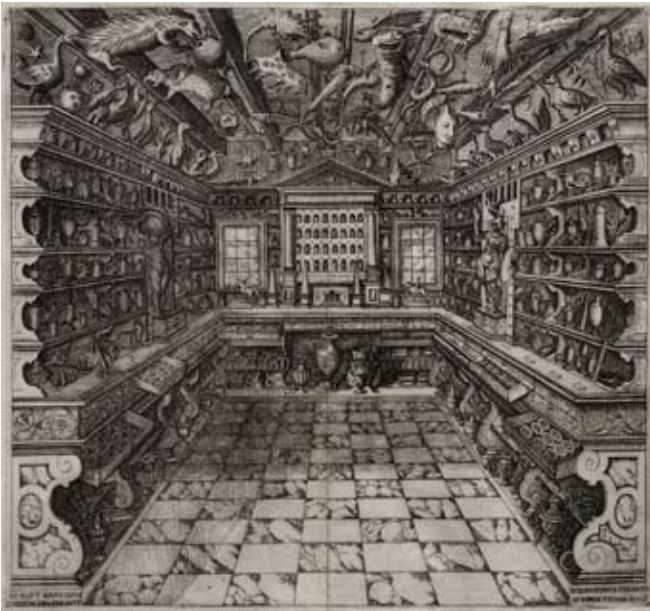
The *Wunderkammer*, or Cabinet of Curiosities

10 Domenico Sestini, 1750–1832, *Descrizione del museo d'antiquaria e del gabinetto d'istoria naturale di Sua Eccellenza il sigre principe di Biscari, Ignazio Paternò Castello, patrizio catanese*, Florence, 1776, David K.E. Bruce Fund

The collection of Prince Ignazio Paternò Castello of Biscari (1719–1786), catalogued by Sestini in 1776, was considered the most distinguished in Sicily. A cabinet or *Wunderkammer* was meant to recreate the entire world in an enclosed space. As was typical of cabinets at the time, this collection contained sculpture, coins, natural history specimens, and archaeological objects, as well as scientific and optical instruments, weapons, and costumes.

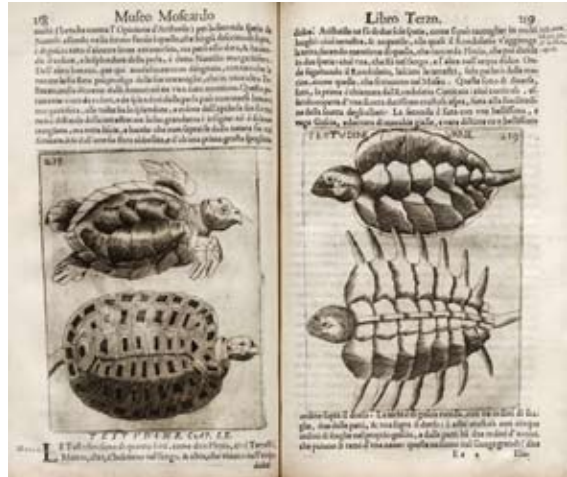
11 Benedetto Ceruti, died 1620, Andrea Chiocco, died 1624, *Musaeum Francisci Calceolarii iunioris veronensis*, Verona, 1622, Ahmanson Foundation Fund

Francesco Calzolari (1522–1609), a wealthy pharmacist and botanist, founded this natural history and art collection. His grandson by the same name (born c. 1585) expanded it, and it became one of the most extensive in Italy. The strength of the collection were the botanical and mineralogical specimens. The double plate shown here gives a view of the room containing the museum. The entire collection was eventually acquired by Lodovico Moscardo, who continued to expand it with his own additions.



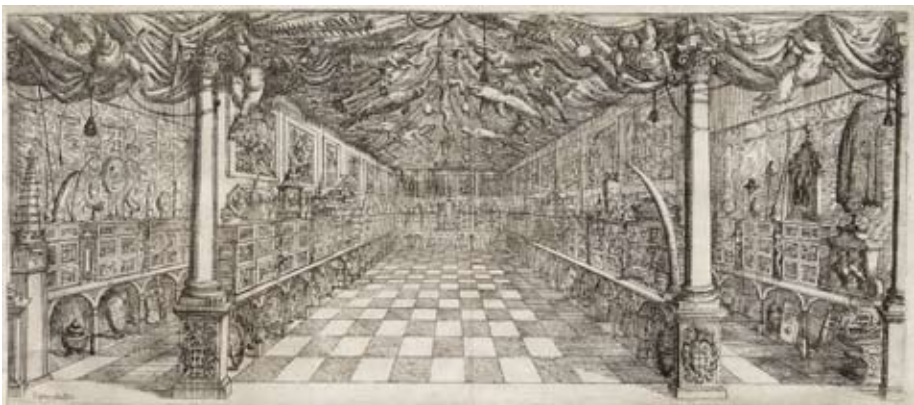
12 Lodovico Moscardo,
*Note ovvero memorie del museo
 di Lodovico Moscardo, nobile
 veronese, academico filarmonico,*
 Padua, 1656, David K.E.
 Bruce Fund

Moscardo acquired Calzolari's cabinet and continued to collect a variety of exotic antiquities, shells, minerals, animals, fruit, inscriptions, and coins. Over a thirty-year period he painstakingly described all these items himself and published this catalogue in two parts, the first in Padua in 1656 and the second in 1672 in Verona, bound together in a single volume here. The turtle specimens shown here are from part one.



13 Paolo Maria Terzagio, Pietro Francesco Scarabelli, *Museo ò Galeria: Adunata dal Sapere, e dallo Studio del Sig. Canonico Manfredo Settala Nobile Milanese,* Tortona, 1666, A.W. Mellon Foundation New Century Fund

This catalogue documents the museum formed by Lodovico Settala, a physician in Milan, and his son, Manfredo (1600–1680), a canon of the Cathedral. Manfredo hoped to give the collection to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan on his death, but an arrangement could not be made and the collection was instead dispersed. This catalogue remains the sole record of its contents.



Checklist of the exhibition *Collections Frozen in Time, Selections from the National Gallery of Art Library*, February 5–July 24, 2011.

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Written by Yuri Long, and produced by the library and the publishing office.

The Gallery Web site features highlights from the exhibition and links to exhibition-related activities at www.nga.gov/exhibitions/frozeninfo.shtm.

