

# **Finding aid for the Stefano Della Bella etchings, circa 1642-1650 P830003**

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## Special Collections

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## Summary Information

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- Repository:** Special Collections
- Creator:** Della Bella, Stefano, 1610-1664
- Title:** Stefano Della Bella etchings
- ID:** P830003
- Dates:** circa 1642-1650
- Extent:** 35 prints (1 box)
- 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:** Italian
- Abstract:** Four suites of etchings by Stefano della Bella, comprising 35 prints. Primarily decorative, they depict genre scenes of people and animals (in rural settings), fantastic vases, panels of grotesques, and the Medici Villa Demidoff and its gardens near Florence.

### Preferred Citation

Stefano Della Bella etchings, ca. 1642-1650, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Accession no. P830003.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa98r5>

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## Biographical/Historical Note

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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.

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## Scope and Content of Collection

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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 grottesche*, 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).

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## Arrangement note

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The prints are arranged in their 4 respective suites.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access

Open for use by qualified researchers.

### Publication Rights

Contact [Library Rights and Reproductions](#).

### 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.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### 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 Materials

- Etchings (prints) -- France -- 17th century
- Etchings (prints) -- Italy -- 17th century
- Prints (visual works) -- France -- 17th century
- Prints (visual works) -- Italy -- 17th century

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## Key to Entries

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*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.

Vesme = Alessandro Baudi di Vesme. *Le peintre-graveur italien: ouvrage faisant suite au Peintre-graveur de Bartsch*. Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1971.

Vesme/Massar = Alessandro Baudi di Vesme. *Stefano della Bella; catalogue raisonne*. With introduction and additions by Phyllis Dearborn Massar. [New York]: Collectors Editions, [1971].

Guilmard = Désiré Guilmard. *Les maîtres ornementistes, dessinateurs, peintres, architectes, sculpteurs et graveurs; écoles française, italienne, allemande, et des Pays-Bas (flamande & hollandaise)*. Paris, 1880-81: E. Plon.

Berlin Kat. = Staatliche Kunstbibliothek (Berlin, Germany). *Katalog der Ornamentstichsammlung der Staatlichen Kunstbibliothek, Berlin*. Berlin; Leipzig: Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1939.

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## Bibliography

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Alessandro Baudi di Vesme. *Le peintre-graveur italien: ouvrage faisant suite au Peintre-graveur de Bartsch*. Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1971.

Alessandro Baudi di Vesme. *Stefano della Bella; catalogue raisonne*. With introduction and additions by Phyllis Dearborn Massar. [New York]: Collectors Editions, [1971].

Anna Forlani Tempesti. *Mostra di incisioni di Stefano Della Bella*. Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1973. Cataloghi 39 (Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi).

Ulrich Thieme und Felix Becker, eds. *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart: unter Mitwirkung von 300 Fachgelehrten des In- und Auslandes*. Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1907-1950.

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## Collection Inventory

<b>Four suites of Della Bella etchings, ca. 1642-1650</b>		<b>1 box(es)</b>	
<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Containers</b>		
<p><i>Agreable diversité de figures</i></p> <p><i>Scope and Contents note:</i> Paris, 1642: Israel Henriette. Between Vesme second and third states, mentioned in Vesme/Massar. 11 plates including title. Sh. 8.2 x 10.8. Vesme 117-127. Formerly R 434.</p>	Oversize box 1	Folder 1	
<p><i>Raccolta di vasi diversi</i></p> <p><i>Scope and Contents note:</i> n.p., n.d. [ca. 1645]. Third state. 6 plates including title. Pl. 9.3x 18.8; Sh. 21.7 x 29.2. Vesme 1040-1050. Berlin Kat. 1137. Guilmard p.315. Formerly R 457.</p>	Oversize box 1	Folder 2	
<p><i>Ornamenti o grottesche</i></p> <p><i>Scope and Contents note:</i> [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.</p>	Oversize box 1	Folder 3	
<p>[Gardens of Villa Pratolino]</p> <p><i>Scope and Contents note:</i> 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.</p>	Oversize box 1	Folder 4	

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