

Caravaggio's "Still Life" Comes Alive in the Galleria Borghese

Samantha Janazzo (November 21, 2016)



Witness a timeline of oil paintings organized by the curators of the Borghese Gallery in Rome of the transitions in Caravaggio's still life career juxtaposed with the work of those he influenced.

The [Borghese Gallery](#) [2] in Rome has introduced an exhibition called "[The Origin of Still Life in Italy-](#)



[Caravaggio and the Master of Hartford](#) [3]," which will be on display until February 19, 2017.

From the beginning of history, Rome has experienced thousands of years of social, political, and cultural transitions. Today, the city continues to be steeped in culture and saturated with art. From the pottery and sculptures of the Ancient Greek and Roman World to the oil paintings of the Renaissance, [Caravaggio](#) [4] bridges polytheistic mythology to the monotheistic Christianity of his time.

The magnificent collection showcases a range of 40 pieces that embody similar characteristics to Caravaggio himself. The collection includes "[Basket of Fruit](#) [5]" from the [Pinacoteca Ambrosiana](#) [6] in Milan, along with "[Young Sick Bacchus](#) [7]" and "[Boy with a Basket of Fruit](#) [8]" all by Caravaggio. Crucial to the exhibition for their deep stylistic similarities are still life portraits by the "[Hartford Master](#) [9]."

Curators at the Borghese Gallery have focused on exposing a specific concentration: a display of the progression of stationary naturalism to create a timeline from the beginning of Caravaggio's still life portraiture through his later years. In order to preserve the still life tradition artists such as [Vincenzo Campi](#) [10], [Giuseppe Arcimboldo](#) [11], and [Giovanni Antonio Figino](#) [12] are displayed to strengthen the transition of style, as well as the Master of Hartford, whose work is so similar to Caravaggio that many believe he is the identity of the pseudonym.

Four paintings attributed to the Master of Hartford from [Federico Zeri](#) [13]'s collection, originally from the Scipione Borghese collection, are on loan to demonstrate a difference in still life styles, offering an interesting contrast. The juxtaposition adds tenacity and excitement as the viewer is able to see different transitions, styles, and trademarks amongst history's most impressive still life painters.

Overall, the collection illustrates a revolution started by Caravaggio and the Master of Hartford, including those who were inspired by and experimented with their work. The challenge of still life painting is just as vigorous as pursuing motion.

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- [1] <http://newsite.iitaly.org/files/boywithabasketoffruit-caravaggio.jpg>
- [2] <http://www.galleriaborghese.it/eng/museums.html>
- [3] <http://www.plumevoyage.fr/en/magazine/voyage/luxe/breve/its-now-september-2016-the-origin-of-the-still-life-in-italy-caravaggio-and-the-master-of-hartford-at-the-galleria-borghese-rome/>
- [4] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caravaggio>
- [5] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basket_of_Fruit_\(Caravaggio\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basket_of_Fruit_(Caravaggio))
- [6] <http://www.leonardo-ambrosiana.it/en/>
- [7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Sick_Bacchus
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