

Kimbell Educator Packet



FLESH & BLOOD

Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum

Matthias Stom, *Supper at Emmaus* (detail), c. 1635–40, oil on canvas. Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

Kimbell Art Museum

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PREPARING STUDENTS IN ADVANCE

We look forward to welcoming your school group to the museum. Here are a few suggestions for teachers to help to ensure a successful, productive learning experience at the museum.

LOOK, DISCUSS, CREATE

Use this resource to lead classroom discussions and related activities prior to the visit. (Suggested activities may also be used after the visit.)

REVIEW MUSEUM GUIDELINES

For students:

- Touch the works of art only with your eyes, never with your hands.
- Walk in the museum—do not run.
- Use a quiet voice when sharing your ideas.
- No flash photography is permitted in special exhibitions or permanent collection galleries.
- We request that students refrain from taking pictures during docent-guided tours.
- Write and draw only with pencils—no pens or markers, please.

Additional information for teachers:

- Backpacks, umbrellas, or other bulky items are not allowed in the galleries. Free parcel check is available.
- Seeing-eye dogs and other service animals assisting people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in the museum.
- Sketching is allowed in the galleries as long as it is in pencil and does not obstruct or interfere with other visitors.
- Unscheduled lecturing to groups is not permitted.
- No food, drinks, or water bottles are allowed in any galleries.
- Cell phones should be turned to silent mode while in the museum.
- Tobacco use, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, electronic cigarettes, snuff, and chewing tobacco, is not permitted in the museum or anywhere on the museum's grounds.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION



Alexandre Hyacinthe Dunouy, *View of Naples from Capodimonte*, 1813, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

Contemporary travelers who know Naples primarily as a jumping-off point to the great archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum overlook the riches of the city—its lively neighborhoods and grand public squares, its palaces, churches, and museums. In a verdant park looking out over the city to Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples, the Capodimonte Museum is one of Italy’s largest art galleries and home to a superb collection of Italian painting.

At the museum’s heart is the splendid Farnese family collection of Renaissance painting and sculpture, formed in Parma and Rome in the sixteenth century and brought south in the eighteenth century by Charles VII of the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, who later became Charles III of Spain. Impressive seventeenth-century masterpieces—grounded in realism and produced in Italy by Italian, French, and Spanish artists—were added to this foundation in succeeding centuries, coming to the museum by transfer from religious institutions, by gift, and by purchase. *Flesh and Blood* brings forty of the museum’s most important works to the Kimbell, the majority for the first time.

Throughout this exhibition, you will see a focus on the human figure. *Flesh and Blood* features many profound expressions of the intersection of physical and spiritual existence—the human body as a vehicle to demonstrate power or to express love and devotion, labor and violence, tragic suffering, and spiritual release. The exhibition offers the rare opportunity to see how brilliant and innovative artists such as Raphael, Titian, El Greco, Parmigianino, Caravaggio, Reni, and Ribera approached these themes with originality and a sense of immediacy that still seems innovative today.

THE FARNESE, PRINCES AND PATRONS

Born in a small town within the Papal States north of Rome, Alessandro Farnese (1468–1549) entered a world undergoing rapid political and religious change. His star rose steadily as he pursued a career within the Church, and in 1534 he was elected pope, taking the name Paul III. This immediately increased his wealth and power.

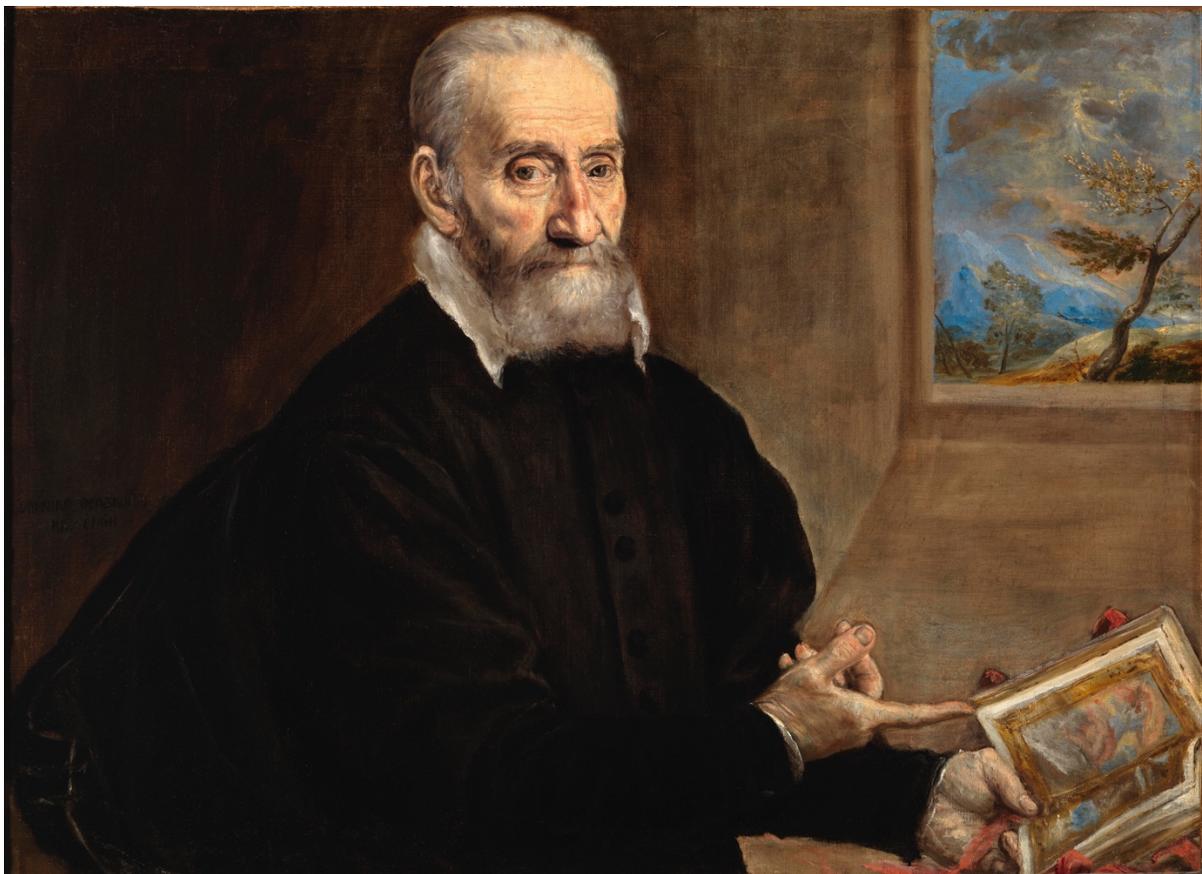
As Paul III, he sat at the epicenter of European art and politics: he excommunicated the rebellious King Henry VIII of England in 1538; recognized the Jesuit order in 1540; and convened the Council of Trent in 1545 to combat Protestantism. He was also a powerful patron of the arts, commissioning Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment* fresco in the Sistine Chapel and beginning to assemble one of the finest art collections in Europe. This enterprise was carried on by his heirs for almost two hundred years and eventually formed the core of the Capodimonte Museum's collection.



Raphael, *Portrait of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Future Pope Paul III*, c. 1509–11, oil on wood panel
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

THE FARNESE COLLECTION

Paul III's flagrant nepotism thrust the churchman's illegitimate descendants into the power circles of the Roman Catholic Church and into the noble families of Europe. His grandson Alessandro the Younger (1520–1589), who became a cardinal at the age of fourteen, commissioned paintings from Titian and El Greco. Alessandro also supported the humanist and historian Fulvio Orsini, who procured works for the Farnese collection and donated his own extensive art holdings to the family at his death in 1600. As Dukes of Parma, the Farnese also managed to acquire masterpieces from the local Renaissance genius Parmigianino, whose paintings *Antea* and *Lucrezia* are on view in the exhibition.



El Greco, *Portrait of Giulio Clovio*, c. 1571, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

THE CARRACCI

The Carracci painters—the brothers Agostino (1557–1602) and Annibale (1560–1609) and their older cousin Ludovico (1555–1619)—are not well-known today, but were among the greatest figures of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century art in Italy and renowned for centuries. They came from Emilia, a region of northern Italy that included the Farnese territories of Parma and Piacenza as well as the city of Bologna. The Carracci formed an influential school of painting, first in Emilia and later in Rome, the ancient imperial city and capital of the Church. Their teaching and their example offered a new model of naturalistic style that contributed to shaping the two main artistic currents of the 1600s: the Baroque and seventeenth-century classicism.

This exhibition presents paintings by Annibale and Agostino and their pupils Lanfranco and Guido Reni. These demonstrate their deep attention to nature and to the human body studied from life.



Bartolomeo Schedoni, *Charity*, 1611, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

VIOLENCE AND SEDUCTION

Narratives of physical violence and amorous seduction play an important role in visual art, for they provide a large number of compelling subjects and themes, engaging viewers by exciting both their senses and their imaginations. Women are central in this dynamic, presented as righteous heroines or virtuous mothers, vulnerable victims or objects of desire.

Since antiquity, the female body has been seen as a symbol of ideal beauty and perfection. In early modern Europe, even if women were extensively featured in artworks, very few living women had the power to be patrons, and even fewer were given access to the artistic profession. As a result, the female body in most High Renaissance works appears through the lens of a male gaze. Titian's *Danaë* attests to the rise of the erotic nude in early sixteenth-century Venice and to the role of the artist as both observer and creator of beauty. A bronze statue by Florentine sculptor Giambologna—depicting an act of violence against a woman—relates to period associations between male and female bodies and strategies of political conquest in the climate of absolutist rulership prevalent in sixteenth-century Europe. Finally, in Massimo Stanzione's *Massacre of the Innocents*, the painter depicts a biblical scene of horror—a scene that paradoxically seduces the viewer's eye thanks to the power of its expression, the dynamism of its composition, and the refinement of its execution.



Titian, *Danaë*, 1544–45, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

PAINTING IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NAPLES

Despite being the second-largest city in Europe, Naples lacked a cohesive artistic scene at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This changed dramatically in 1606 with the arrival of Michelangelo Merisi, known as Caravaggio (1571–1610). He had started a revolution in painting in Rome by portraying the human body with unforgiving naturalism and by amplifying pictorial drama with theatrical gestures and strong contrasts of light and dark (*chiaroscuro*).

The impact of this new style was immediate and pervasive, joining the Neapolitan painters' already existing commitment to depicting the body in both sacred and profane subjects. Battistello Caracciolo, who assisted Caravaggio during the artist's first short stay in Naples, was among the artist's earliest and most enthusiastic emulators, giving visionary figures an almost palpable physical presence. Spanish-born Jusepe de Ribera settled in Naples and applied the new realism to emotionally intense altarpieces and vivid classical scenes. Over the next century, much Neapolitan painting retained this earthy, unflinching, and dramatic intensity.



Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi), *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1607, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

BIBLICAL AND MYTHOLOGICAL IMAGES

Biblical scenes and religious subjects offered painters numerous opportunities for public commissions during the Renaissance and through the Baroque period. The resulting canvases were mostly intended to decorate churches, chapels, or convents. But private collectors also sought out artworks, sometimes depicting stories from Greek and Roman mythology. The lords and rulers of Italy, since at least the 1400s, had begun to assemble antiquities along with modern works of art inspired by the classical world to proclaim their erudition and good taste.

By the 1600s, artists comfortably addressed those themes in a range of tones and styles, some of which are demonstrated by the works in this gallery. Guido Reni's lyrical rendition of the myth of Atalanta and Hippomenes exploits the expressive potential of modern *chiaroscuro* while retaining a classicizing language. Jusepe de Ribera's Bacchic scene is a grotesque commentary on the time-held canons of physical beauty. And Luca Giordano draws from the pantheon of ancient gods to offer a comical reading of a sensual subject.

As private picture galleries proliferated in the seventeenth century, more market opportunities were offered to painters. Such settings encouraged a new kind of picture, whose theme could be either mythological or religious—but less devotional and more narrative. At the same time, and in light of patrons' tastes, the formats of these paintings often became more horizontal. In this atmosphere, more secular and decorative tastes produced a new market for still-life paintings.



Guido Reni, *Atalanta and Hippomenes*, c. 1620–25, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

STILL-LIFE PAINTING IN NAPLES

Still life was a natural subject matter for Neapolitan artists, given their long-standing interest in everyday subjects. The genre came to enjoy widespread popularity among private collectors in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Naples, ultimately attaining high economic value and reaching exceptional levels of quality. Three generations of artists contributed to the evolution of the still life, from skillful depictions of accessory objects in the figural works of Caravaggesque painters to an independent and flourishing artistic genre.

Unlike in Northern Europe, Neapolitan still lifes rarely aspired to convey allegorical or moral messages. Instead, paintings of bouquets of flowers, bunches of vegetables, freshly killed game, baked goods, and kitchen utensils would have decorated domestic interiors and marked the sophistication of the household while celebrating the variety and abundance of Neapolitan cuisine.



Andrea Belvedere, *Still Life with Morning Glories and Boule de Neige Roses*, 1680–90, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples



Titian, *Pope Paul III*, 1543, oil on canvas

Titian
Italian, 1488/90–1576

Pope Paul III

1543, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

This portrait of Alessandro Farnese as Pope Paul III is the first of three created by Titian. The artist was already the most sought-after portraitist in Europe—all the principal ruling families of Northern Italy, and even the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, were among his patrons. In 1543, Paul III invited Titian to join the papal delegation on one of the most delicate missions in his diplomatic career: negotiations with Charles V to forge an alliance between the papacy and the vast and powerful empire.

In this official portrait, Titian delivers a vivid likeness of both the physical being—a stooped, frail seventy-five-year old—and the shrewd statesman whose sparkling eyes and raised eyebrow seem to interrogate the viewer. His right hand displays the papal ring and rests firmly on a purse, symbolizing the wealth and responsibility of the church.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is this man wearing? What is he holding? Discuss the different materials and textures that you see. How might these details communicate the sitter's wealth and status as Pope?

Describe his expression and posture. What "image" does he present to us? What do you imagine he might say to you?

Describe an eye-catching detail. What colors do you see? How do they help your eye travel around the painting?

Where is the light source? Where do you notice strong shadows or highlights? How does the artist draw attention to the man's face?

CREATE your own self-portrait or work with a partner to create portraits of each other. Be sure to wear a favorite outfit and hold something meaningful to you.



Parmigianino, *Antea*, c. 1535, oil on canvas

Parmigianino
Italian, 1503–1540

Antea

c. 1535, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

This magnetic portrait of a beautiful, lavishly dressed young woman has been called *Antea* since the seventeenth century, when a writer speculated that Parmigianino had painted his mistress. But the sitter's identity remains unknown, and the coded language of costume and gesture here suggests that she represents an ideal of beauty rather than a specific person. She wears a glove on one hand and with the other gestures toward her heart while touching a gold chain. These personal items, as well as the marten fur, jewelry, and even the embroidered apron, were typical betrothal gifts offered by lovers. By wearing and displaying these gifts, the woman signals acceptance of her lover or groom.

In his short career, Francesco Mazzola, who came from Parma—thus his nickname, Parmigianino—worked in Florence, Rome, Bologna, and his hometown, where this work was probably painted. He was renowned for his elegant oil paintings and frescoes and as a draughtsman and innovative printmaker.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Describe the woman's costume. What luxurious details catch your eye? Do you have a favorite outfit in your closet? What accessories might you wear in your portrait?

Describe the different textures that you see. How does the sitter's sense of touch play a role in her portrait?

Challenge yourself to locate as many patterns as you can in the painting. Which one is your favorite? What do these different elements add to the picture?

What do you notice about her expression? Who do you think she might be? Why?

What colors do you see? How do they help your eye travel around the painting?

Where is the light coming from? Which areas are the brightest? Where do you see shadows?

COLLABORATE with a friend to tell a story about *Antea*. Where might she be going in her fancy outfit? What roles might she have in society? How old is she? How does she spend her time?



El Greco, *Boy Blowing on an Ember*, 1571–72, oil on canvas

El Greco

Greek, active in Italy and Spain, c. 1541–1614

Boy Blowing on an Ember

1571–72, oil on canvas

Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

In a dark room, a boy lights a candle by blowing on a glowing ember. This momentary illumination makes his rapt concentration visible to the viewer. What seems like a scene taken from everyday life is actually the Greek-born El Greco's effort to compete with a famous lost painting by an ancient artist, also Greek, described by the Roman author Pliny the Elder: a lifelike work of a boy pursing his lips to blow on an ember. El Greco created this work and the portrait of Giulio Clovio in Rome, where he was received as a guest by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese the Younger from 1570 to 1576.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What's happening here? What is the boy doing? How do you think this task fits into his daily life? Where is he and what do you think might be happening around him (outside of the picture)? What happens next?

What makes this scene look so real and convincing?

List as many adjectives as you can to describe the artist's brushstrokes. Describe their color, shape, texture, and movement. What do these variations add to the painting?

Would this painting be as successful in black and white? Why is color important? How does color move your eye around the painting? Trace the journey of a single color around the surface of the canvas.

How do you think El Greco went about painting this brief moment of illumination? What steps might have been a part of his process? Why do you think he chose to paint something so fleeting?

RECREATE the way light falls on the face of the boy in El Greco's painting by asking a friend to hold a flashlight pointed up toward their face. Quickly sketch what you see. Do you notice any dramatic shadows or highlights? What's challenging about drawing their image?



Annibale Carracci, *Pietà*, 1599–1600, oil on canvas

Annibale Carracci
Italian, 1560–1609

Pietà

1599–1600, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

This devotional painting is considered an early masterpiece of Baroque art for its capacity to elicit the viewer’s emotional response through gesture and color. Following the Crucifixion, the Virgin Mary cradles the lifeless body of her son Jesus Christ on her lap, a formula known in medieval art as *pietà*. Two angels complete the scene—one pricks his finger on Christ’s crown of thorns as he looks out at the viewer to encourage compassionate participation in the scene of mourning.

Annibale modeled his composition on a sculpture, Michelangelo’s renowned Vatican *Pietà* (1498–99), but he based his figures on live models, whom he posed after the prototype. The result is an enhanced sense of naturalism in the figures’ anatomy, while the somber tones of the Virgin’s deep-blue dress, Christ’s pale body, and the nocturnal setting contribute to the event’s tragic emotion.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What’s happening in this image? Who are these people and how do you know? Describe their facial expressions and gestures. What do these details tell us?

Discuss how the figures are arranged. Together, what shape do their bodies make? Who is interacting with whom and where do you see touch? How do the hands help to tell the story?

What colors do you see? Which areas contain cooler colors? Which areas are warmest? What might these contrasts tell us?

How does the lighting direct our eye? Which areas are brightest and what areas are more in shadow? What time of day do you think this is? Describe the mood.

Before it came to the museum, what sort of space do you think originally housed this picture? Who might have wanted to display this picture and why?

COMPARE this painting with Michelangelo’s *Pietà* at the Vatican. What’s similar or different about these works of art? Which feels more somber or emotionally stirring to you? Why?



Matthias Stom, *Supper at Emmaus*, c. 1635–40, oil on canvas

Matthias Stom
Dutch, c. 1600–1650

Supper at Emmaus

c. 1635–40, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

This candlelit dinner scene becomes a moment of revelation when two of Christ's disciples, traveling to Emmaus, suddenly realize that the stranger sharing a meal with them is Jesus, miraculously resurrected from the dead. The single candle illuminates their simple meal as well as the amazement on their faces.

Born in the Netherlands, Stom was one of numerous international artists drawn to Naples. He had trained with Gerrit van Honthorst, a fellow Dutchman who had encountered the paintings of Caravaggio in Rome. Stom resettled in Naples in 1632, where his candlelit interior nocturnes inspired by Honthorst were popular with patrons and collectors.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What do you think is being communicated between the figures? Look at their faces. Who's listening and who's talking?

Describe the poses. What do the hands tell us? How does each figure's body language suggest what they're feeling?

What's the setting? What time of day is this and how can you tell?

Discuss our point of view. How close are we to the figures? How does the artist make us feel as if we're part of the story?

Where is the light coming from? Who is most illuminated and who is most in shadow? How might this help to tell the story?

READ the biblical passage that details the story of the supper at Emmaus, Luke 24:13–35. How does this passage affect your understanding of the painting?



Jusepe de Ribera, *Saint Jerome*, 1626, oil on canvas

Jusepe de Ribera
Spanish, 1591–1652

Saint Jerome

1626, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

Jerome (c. 347–420) was a convert to Christianity who devoted his life to studying the Bible, often isolating himself in the desert. Here, in the middle of his contemplation, an angel suddenly appears and blows a horn, startling the solitary man with the announcement of his imminent death. The stark light from above illuminates the scholar's texts and a skull, the symbol of death, as well as his withered body. Ribera's thickly loaded paintbrush renders Jerome's wrinkled forehead and stomach as palpable human skin, making paint a metaphor for flesh itself.

Born in Valencia, Spain, Ribera moved to Italy as early as 1606, painting his first known works in Parma and then transferring to Rome in 1613. Arriving in Naples in 1616, Ribera quickly became the leading artist; his command of realism and *chiaroscuro* (use of strong contrast between light and dark) was impressive, and he also benefited from the fact that Naples was governed by Spain. In addition to paintings and altarpieces he made for clients in Naples, he sent numerous works back to clients in his home country.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What do you see happening? How are these two figures interacting? Are they happy to see one another? What do you think Jerome is feeling based on his facial expression and body language?

Where are we? Describe the space that surrounds the figures. Where is the light coming from? What does it highlight and what does it leave in darkness? How does this affect the mood?

What objects does Jerome have with him? What might these symbolize or tell us about how he spends his time?

What is Jerome wearing? When was the last time he trimmed his beard? What might these details tell us about Jerome's commitment to his work?

RESERACH the life and times of Saint Jerome. How have other artists shown him in the past? How do these images compare with Ribera's?



Giovan Battista Recco, *Still Life with Candles and a Goat's Head*, c. 1650, oil on canvas

Giovan Battista Recco
Italian, 1615–1660

Still Life with Candles and a Goat's Head

c. 1650, oil on canvas

Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

The Recco family workshop dominated seventeenth-century Neapolitan production of still-life paintings for at least three generations. Giovan Battista was active in Naples since the 1630s and was strongly influenced by the work of Ribera and other Neapolitan followers of Caravaggio, from whom he derived objects and motifs for his paintings. In this large, airy canvas, Giovan Battista seemingly transports us into a Neapolitan kitchen. A stone ledge is arrayed with edibles, utensils, and dishes, all of which possess different textures and are rendered with tactile precision to appeal to the viewer's faculties of sight, touch, and taste.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Work as a group to identify all of the objects that you see. What do they have in common? What differences do you notice? If these objects were arranged inside a house, what room might this be?

What sort of textures and colors do you see? Do any of these repeat in other areas? How do these details direct your eye?

How are the objects arranged in relationship to one another? What appears unusual to you? What might you do differently when creating your own still life to paint?

ZOOM IN on one object from this scene and sketch it on an expanded scale. For an added challenge, choose unusual positions for your own still-life elements.



Francesco Solimena, *Self-Portrait*, 1715, oil on canvas

Francesco Solimena
Italian, 1657–1747

Self-Portrait

1715, oil on canvas
Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples

The confidence and flair evident in this superb self-portrait created demand for Solimena’s work in numerous European courts over the course of his long career. Emerging from the naturalistic model of seventeenth-century Neapolitan painting seen earlier in this exhibition, Solimena signaled a new course for artists by the end of the century as he introduced rich color and light effects, exemplified in the painting on the easel behind him, possibly an allegory of the gods Zephyrus and Flora.

This versatile painter would adjust easily to a new regime when Charles of Bourbon came from Spain to assume the throne as King of Naples in 1734. Charles would strengthen the monarchy in Naples and provide opportunities for artists as he directed resources toward the construction of a new palace and park, as well as a porcelain factory and tapestry workshop. With his inheritance of the Farnese collection in 1731 and a rededication to the arts, Charles is credited with single-handedly creating the conditions for the city’s golden age and building the reputation of Naples as the renowned artistic capital we know today.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

How does Solimena present himself? Describe the pose and facial expression. What is he doing? What is he wearing and holding? What kind of impression do these details make on the viewer?

Talk about the different colors that you see. Where are they repeated? How do they carry your eye across the canvas?

Where is the light coming from? Which areas are the brightest? Which parts are more in shadow? How does the lighting affect the mood?

Look closely at the painting pictured on the far left. How does this image compare to the one Solimena paints of himself?

IMAGINE you’re a client or student of Solimena’s. Write a short dialogue that you might have with the artist in his studio. What are his interests, hobbies, and concerns?