

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Giovanna Garzoni

(Ascoli Piceno 1600 - 1670 Rome)

*Still life of flowers in a glass vase*

c. 1640 - 1650

tempera on vellum with traces of black pencil

44.4 x 37 cm.;

17 1/2 x 14 5/8 in.

---

## Provenance

Possibly Luca Ferrari the Abbot (d. 1688), Villa Margone, Trento;

Bequeathed to Margherita Rothier, Trento (her name inscribed on the top, alongside the perimeter of the support on the unpainted margin);

By descent in the Lupis-Salvadori family (following the marriage of Margherita Rothier and Francesco Lupis in October 1689) until at least 1934, when it was hanging on the walls of the family property, Villa Margone, Trento;

With Rob Smeets Gallery, Geneva,

From whom acquired by the present owners in 2022.

---

## Literature

C. Lunelli, 'La raccolta d'arte dell'abate Luca Ferrari (1688)', in *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati di Scienza Lettere e Arti*, 1974-1975, series VI, vol. XIV-XV, p. 115.

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

## Comparative Literature

G. Gerola, 'La serie di ritratti di celebrità della villa Margon presso Trento', in *Bulletin des Sciences Historiques*, 25, 1934, pp. 384-392;

G. Casale, *Giovanna Garzoni: "Insigne miniatrice", 1600-1670*, Milan 1991 (with previous bibliography);

G. Casale (ed.), *Gli Incanti dell'Iride: Giovanna Garzoni pittrice nel Seicento*, Milan 1996;

F. Bottacin, *Tiberio Tinelli: "Pittore e Cavaliere" (1587-1639)*, Mariano del Friuli 2004;

S. Meloni Trkulja & E. Fumagalli, *Giovanna Garzoni: nature morte*, Milan 2008;

S. Barker (ed.), *La grandezza dell'Universo nell'arte di Giovanna Garzoni*, Livorno 2020 (with previous bibliography).

---

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



---

LONDON

NEW YORK

MADRID

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

Giovanna Garzoni can probably be considered the greatest miniaturist of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Italy. Born in the Marche region to a family of Venetian artists and artisans, she was trained in Venice in the studios of Palma Giovane and Tiberio Tinelli, who became her husband for the short period of their unhappy marriage. After their divorce, she settled in Rome for a brief time and then moved to Naples (at the court of the Spanish Viceroy), Turin (at the Savoy court), London, and Paris, among other European countries. She also worked for the Medici in Florence and finally moved again to Rome, where in 1670 she died both wealthy and renowned.

From what we know, Garzoni realised only two oil paintings, both executed at the beginning of her career in the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and a large number of tempera on vellum works, a technique she quickly devoted herself to unconditionally and employed for portraits and especially for still lifes.

Her first still lifes date from the Turin period (1632-1637), when she came into contact with the works of Lombard painters like Fede Galizia and Panfilo Nuvolone and Flemish artists, whose works were abundant in the Savoy collection. Her following stay North of the Alps also allowed her to directly observe the work of French miniaturists, as well as other still lifes by Flemish and Dutch painters. It is certainly in this moment that Garzoni acquired her taste for the accurate depiction of minute details and the almost analytical research she conducted on every single object she painted, as if to unveil its inner secrets.

When she arrived in Florence in 1642, Garzoni – who is sometimes recorded in the documents of the time as *Flemish* or *French* – was a mature and accomplished artist, gifted with an extremely refined technique and an absolutely personal and original style. The Medici fell in love with her work and remained, even after her relocation to Rome, her main commissioners.

Garzoni settled in Rome from around 1651 and became close to the Academy of St. Luke, to which in her will of 1666 she donated almost all of her belongings. Through this bequest (Garzoni died in Rome in February 1670), the Academy became the owner of various



# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

miniatures on paper and drawings which are today bound in a single volume but were originally separate pieces. This source acts as a real repertoire of the naturalistic subjects that Garzoni chose for her tempera works.

The beautiful present miniature, originally mounted on a copper slab, has been recently restored and is in excellent condition. The dismantling unveiled the writing on the top, alongside the perimeter of the support on the unpainted margin, of the name *Margarita Rothier*. In 1689, Margherita Rothier married Francesco Lupis in Trento.<sup>1</sup> The notarization of her dowry dates back to the same year and is followed in 1690 by a corrected act to raise the dowry. In this document, for the first time, a series of still lifes called 'miniatures' appear, among which we find the present one: *'un quadro di Miniat.ra con un Vaso di fiori tulipani Narcisi Ranocoli Anemoli Giacinti e Narcisi troni 250'* ('a miniature painting with a Vase of Tulips, Daffodils, Buttercups, Anemones, Hyacinths and Daffodils, Trones 250').<sup>2</sup>

There are not, for the moment, any documentary testaments to clarify the previous provenance of the present miniature. The hypothesis is that it came from Luca Ferrari the Abbot, who died in Trento in 1688, leaving most of his belongings to the two Rothier sisters except the villa Margone that he destined to his nephew: *'Nel ricordato suo testamento, ... lascia eredi dei suoi beni, esclusa la villa di Margon, le sorelle Anna Claudia e Morgara Rottier, venute dalle Fiandre ad abitare presso di lui e del cui talento per la pittura testimoniano parimenti alcuni quadretti eseguiti a Margon e tuttora in possesso della famiglia Salvadori'* ('In the aforementioned will, ... leaves his belongings, except the villa Margone, to the sisters Anna Claudia and Morgara Rottier, who came from Flanders to live with him and whose talent is testified by some small paintings executed in Margone and still among the possessions of the Salvadori family').<sup>3</sup> The nephew, after a few years, sold the fiefdom and the villa Margone to Francesco Lupis, the husband of Margherita Rothier. Then in 1816, Antonio Lupis and Gioseffa Salvadori were married. Since then, the present work has been passed down through generation after generation until its last owners, the noble Salvadori family of Trento. In 1934, the work was still hanging on the walls of villa Margone.

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

Garzoni had been familiar with the theme of vases of flowers since her stay in Piedmont at the Savoy court, where she first came into contact with Flemish art. When she stayed in the Alps she admired Dutch still life paintings by the likes of Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder and his school, from which the spatial arrangements of Garzoni's miniatures and her analytical attention to detail derive. Her compositions differ according to the number of flowers and sometimes include a lot of colourful blooms, always realised with a thick *puntinato* technique that almost absorbs the light and then vibrantly gives it back, thus demonstrating an extremely refined pictorial sensitivity. Garzoni studied the morphology of flowers with great naturalistic attention and care for the details, just as the Flemish masters did, although her fleshy and plastic final rendering of such plants is more of Dutch derivation.

The present miniature can certainly be considered an autograph work by the artist, who realised various miniatures of flowers since her first Florentine stay in 1642 and also after her relocation to Rome in 1651. Some were executed for the Medici family but also as a result of the pressing requests from many other private clients, given the celebrity status this artist of Ascoli Piceno had managed to achieve.

Our vase of transparent glass on a rock, in which the reflection of a window can be seen, contains various types of flowers: tulips, anemones, buttercups, and a daffodil, among others. Given the floral composition and the chromatic tones as well as the vellum's dimensions, our work can be compared to other wonderful miniatures such as those conserved at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe at the Uffizi, especially inventory numbers 2140 O and 2141 O (figs. 1 & 2).<sup>4</sup>

The execution technique is typical of Garzoni: with the tip of her paintbrush she created shapes of soft and delicate colours, which look like pastels, but are sometimes more intense and firm. Her wonderful ability is undoubtable and the refinement of her craft makes her miniatures inimitable.

It is not easy to give a final date to the work because Garzoni used to repeat with small variations the very same floral compositions, sometimes even just modifying the

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

arrangement of flowers (she evidently used to paint them from life and by choosing seasonal varieties of flowers). We can nevertheless say that this tempera on vellum was realised between the end of 1640 and the beginning of 1650.

Gerardo Casale, Rome, 2 April 2022

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



**Figure 1.** Giovanna Garzoni, *Still life of daffodils, carnations and anemones in a glass vase*.  
Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, inv. no. 2140 O



# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



**Figure 2.** Giovanna Garzoni, *Still life of flowers in a glass vase*.  
Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, inv. no. 2141 O

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

---

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Her sister Anna Claudia Rothier, registered in the death records of the Church of S. Maria Maggiore in Trento, is enlisted on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1707 as a septuagenarian noblewoman of French origins.

<sup>2</sup> The Trone was a silver Venetian currency with the effigy of the Doge Niccolò Tron. See C. Lunelli, 'La raccolta d'arte dell'abate Luca Ferrari (1688)', in *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati di Scienza Lettere e Arti*, 1974-1975, series VI, vol. XIV-XV, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> G. Gerola, 'La serie di ritratti di celebrità della villa Margon presso Trento', in *Bulletin des Sciences Historiques*, 25, 1934, p. 388.

<sup>4</sup> G. Casale, *Giovanna Garzoni: "Insigne miniatrice", 1600-1670*, Milan 1991, pp. 98-99.