

**Carlo Orsi-Trinity Fine Art Reveals the History of a Baroque Masterpiece by Foggini,
a Marble Bust of Marguerite Louise of Orléans, Cousin to The Sun King,
at Stand 379 TEFAF Maastricht 2019, 16-24 March 2019 (Previews 14-15 March)**



Giovanni Battista Foggini (1652-1725), *Portrait of Marguerite Louise d'Orléans*, 1687, marble, 77 cm

This marble portrait bust of 1687 portrays Marguerite Louise of Orléans, wife of Cosimo III de' Medici, the *enfant terrible* of the Medici dynasty. A free-spirited woman, Marguerite Louise, although she bore Cosimo three heirs, never submitted emotionally to the marriage, and came to despise her husband, his family and the Court in Florence, and made Cosimo's life miserable. Eventually she obtained a separation, returned to France, and lived as she pleased, bringing even her cousin King Louis XIV to despair at her outrageous behaviour.

The marble bust is offered by Carlo Orsi-Trinity Fine Art, Stand 379, at TEFAF Maastricht with several fresh discoveries: previously unpublished documents clarifying that it was commissioned by the Medici, that it is a fully autograph work by **Giovanni Battista Foggini** (Florence 1652-1725), a contention borne out by specific payments made to the sculptor, and that it was carved at an earlier date than formerly suggested.

It is one of a series of eight masterful busts that celebrates the family of Ferdinand II of Florence, including his Cardinal brothers, and his son Cosimo and the future Grand Duchess Marguerite. This is the last bust from the group to remain on the market, as all of the others are now with European and American public collections, including the Louvre (Paris), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and the Victoria & Albert Museum (London).

Regarding its commission and original location, the bust is mentioned along with the other pieces in the group in inventories of the Villa di Lappeggi, the country residence of Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici, brother to Ferdinand II, immediately after his death in 1711. Research by Carlo Orsi-Trinity Fine Art has found the record of payments to the artist Foggini, showing that the busts were executed between August 1681 and 15 December 1687. The final bust to be delivered was that of Marguerite, who by then had been living back in France for 12 years. Its likeness was probably taken by Foggini from existing images of the Grand Duchess already in the family collections; in fact it is highly likely to be a carved version of a now lost portrait of Marguerite Louise by court portraitist Justus Sustermans, known to us thanks to an engraving by Adriaen Haelwegh.

The group dates to a time when Foggini was heavily influenced by Bernini, the artist previously believed to be the author of these pieces. Among the notable owners of the present bust is the famous 19th century collector and dealer Stefano Bardini, whose clients included Isabella Gardner Stewart and John Pierpont Morgan. Most recently the bust became the prized possession of Alessandro Contini Bonacossi, whose collection is now a public museum in Florence.

The bust will be offered at TEFAF Maastricht by Carlo Orsi-Trinity Fine Art, Stand 379, for an asking price in the region of €3,000,000 (three million euros).

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Carlo Orsi-Trinity Fine Art

Trinity Fine Art was established in 1984 by John Winter, a former senior director of Sotheby's in both London and Italy. In 2016 ownership of the company passed to Carlo Orsi, one of the most respected Italian art dealers in Milan and former Chairman of the Association of Italian Antique Dealers (AAI). The gallery offers a bespoke service, handling the highest quality art works destined for the most discerning public and private collections.