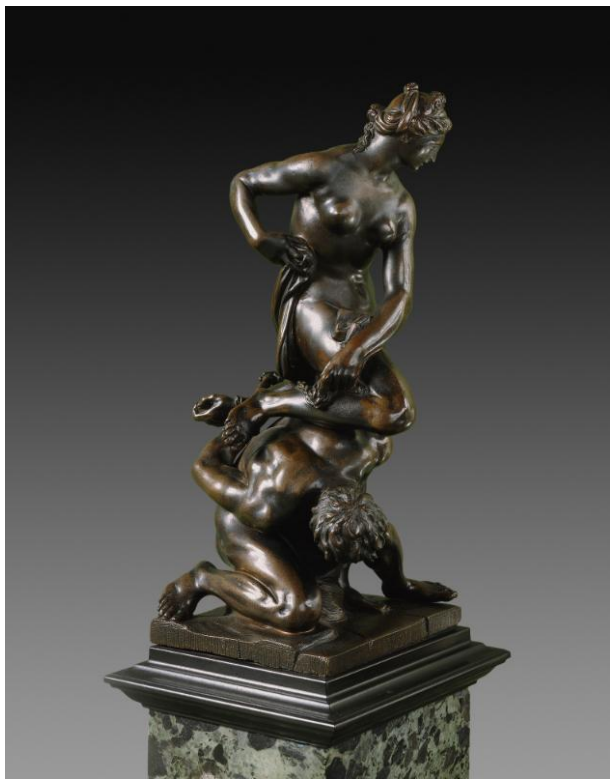


The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Virtue Triumphant Over Vice

Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi (Italian, 1656–1740)

Date late 17th or early 18th century

Medium Bronze

Dimensions H.: 11 3/4 in. (29.8 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1916.2.50

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 10, Living Hall

Commentary Like Severo da Ravenna, Soldani was an enterprising supplier of bronze sculpture, not only original work but also reproductions of antique and earlier Italian subjects, prominent among them those of Michelangelo and Giovanni Bologna. Soldani was heir to the grand Florentine lineage and an extremely skilled and refined sculptor, whose medals and reliefs cast from his own designs were highly accomplished, as were his reproductive bronzes. He is not known to have worked in marble. *Virtue Triumphant over Vice* is a miniature version of Giovanni Bologna's marble group *Florence Triumphant over Pisa*, which was commissioned in 1565 by Francesco de' Medici as a companion to Michelangelo's earlier marble statue of *Victory*. Only a few years before accepting the challenge to provide a pendant to the *Victory*, Giovanni had carved another marble group, *Samson Slaying a Philistine*, which also, of course, demanded comparison with Michelangelo and his earlier project for the same subject. Although Giovanni Bologna took inspiration for *Florence Triumphant over Pisa* from Michelangelo's powerfully kinetic sculpture groups, he transmuted their energies into a purely aesthetic arrangement of cool yet sensuous nudes, harmoniously composed. Like its marble source, Soldani's bronze is designed to be viewed from all sides; but unlike the *Samson and Two Philistines* after Michelangelo, which drives the viewer into continuous motion, the views of the marble and of Soldani's bronze are composed serially in a sequence of frozen facets, suavely connected but each perfect and satisfying as a design in itself. The bronze was produced in several slightly differing models and is known by various titles: *Virtue Triumphant over Vice*; *Honor Overcoming Falsehood*; and *Beauty Chaining Strength*. The precise subject was secondary because, as one of Soldani's princely patrons explained to another sculptor, what mattered was not the subject but that the work should consist of "belli nudi e belle idee." Source: *Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

Collection History Charles Mannheim, Paris.23 J. Pierpont Morgan, London and New York. Duveen. Frick, 1916. Source: *Sculpture in The Frick Collection: Italian*. Volume III. New York: The Frick Collection, 1970.