

# The Frick Collection: Detail Report

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## Triton and Nereid

Netherlandish

**Date** 17th century

**Medium** Bronze

**Dimensions** H.: 25 1/2 in. (64.8 cm)

**Credit Line** Henry Clay Frick Bequest

**Accession Number** 1916.2.63

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 13, West Gallery

**Commentary** Following Giovanni Bologna's example, the vogue for pairing male and female figures grappling in postures of passion or hostility grew and spread. Sometimes, as with the Triton and Nereid, it is not entirely clear whether love or war has been declared, or perhaps only a lusty flirtation is intended. While the inspiration for this bronze was Florentine—and the Triton's pose was borrowed from Giovanni Bologna's bronze relief of the Rape of the Sabines—the conception does not seem Italian. The Italian invention of offering multiple, spiraling views of a sculpture as one circles it seems to have resisted exportation. The front view of the bronze is the dominant one, partly perhaps because of its origins in Giovanni Bologna's relief, while the sides and back are less satisfactory, and nothing much happens in between. The proportion of realism to abstraction has tilted strongly toward the first, transforming the geometric shapes and perfected surfaces of Italian prototypes back into rather fleshy nudes, who thrust and pull at strained and awkward angles rather than spiral together in the flowing curves of the Florentine mode. These figures remind one of such contemporary Dutch painters as Wtewael or Cornelis van Haarlem, whose mannered compositions are peopled with nudes arranged in even more exaggeratedly difficult poses. Although the Frick model is not currently fitted as a fountain, it appears that the group originally was designed for that purpose. Source: Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

**Collection History** Charles Mannheim, Paris. Sold by him, in May 1901, to J. Pierpont Morgan, London and New York. Duveen. Frick, 1916. Source: Sculpture in The Frick Collection: German, Netherlandish, French and British. Volume IV. New York: The Frick Collection, 1970.