



Die Räume der Herrscherin: Höfische Machtentfaltung bei Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici (1667– 1743)

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My doctoral thesis focuses on the artistic and political ambitions of the last member of the Medici family, Anna Maria Luisa (1667-1743), daughter of Cosimo III de' Medici and Marguerite d'Orléans. In 1691, she married the Elector Palatine Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz, who resided at the court of Düsseldorf. Due to the couple's intensive sponsorship of contemporary artists like Adriaen van der Werff, Jan Frans van Douven and Giovanni Battista Foggini, and their assemblage of a remarkable collection of European masterpieces, Düsseldorf became one of the leading centres of the fine arts in Europe around 1700. The court artists shaped the atmosphere of the court through their decoration of the interiors in which Anna de' Medici lived and reigned.

Although scholars have recently focussed on the last phase of the Medici reign, there is still a desideratum in the research. I will address this through a comparative study of the cultural and political interdependencies between Florence and Düsseldorf and other European courts, particularly Vienna and Versailles. My project investigates the question of to what extent Anna de' Medici looked to other European models for artistic political strategies, and in what ways she exploited art as a medium of political representation. In this context, I shall explore Anna de' Medici's commissions for her and her husband's art collection as well as her architectural projects and the decoration of her residences. Did the artists display a specific pictorial vocabulary? How did allegories and/or identifications with figures from the ancient mythology (especially Minerva and Atalanta) serve as paradigms of artistic production and representation? And how can the interplay between interior and exterior, between the private and the public sphere be understood?

A key case study will be a series of portraits that were painted by the court artist Jan Frans van Douven around 1700. The series consists of three single portraits of Anna de' Medici and two double portraits of the noble couple. Against the background of the political occurrences of the *Ancien Régime*, the portraits reflect the sovereign's claim of power. In each case the pair is presented in different costumes and in different settings, appearing almost as actors on a stage, and this raises further questions: To what extent can Anna de' Medici be seen as a mediator between two cultures? Was it possible for her to establish her own Florentine culture in a foreign



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country? How is identity being created through the interplay of “femininity” and “masculinity”? In this context, I shall investigate what role contemporary fashion played, and I furthermore shall explore how much power Anna de’ Medici wielded in shaping her own image as a public figure. The role of women and their participation in the public sphere has been a popular topic of research in recent decades, yet there is a lack of comprehensive study from an interdisciplinary and cultural-historical point of view that explores either the interiors of the private and public spaces or the portraits of the last Medici within their social and political context. My thesis will fill those gaps and contribute to scholarly discussions in several fields.