



## **Art of the Royal Court: Treasures in Pietre Dure from the Palaces of Europe (Metropolitan Museum of Art)**

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This beautiful catalogue provides a comprehensive history of pietre dure, a virtuoso form of hardstone carving that reached an artistic peak in Italy in the 16th century and subsequently spread throughout Europe.

The demanding practice of pietre dure, first used in ancient times, enjoyed a spectacular revival in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. By artistic cutting, semiprecious stones—agate, lapis lazuli, chalcedony, and other colorful hardstones—were fashioned into extravagantly designed luxury objects such as table tops, wall panels, cabinets, and ornate display vessels. Both as objects of desire and as diplomatic gifts, these precious creations captivated the affluent societies of Europe. *Art of the Royal Court* presents 150 masterpieces of pietre dure, many of which are further embellished with gold and silver mounts or decorated with exotic woods and other coveted materials.

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