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Tracing Changes: Botanical Artwork Modeled after Jacques Le Moyne

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Tracing Changes:
Botanical Works Modeled After Jacques Le Moyne

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December 7, 2014
Affirmation of Independent Work

“This thesis represents my own work in accordance with College of Letters & Science regulations.”

Name: [Signature]  Date: December 7, 2014
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Introduction: Scope and Context

One of the most striking images from Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues’s various botanical artworks is the watercolor painting of a peach (Figure 1.1), painted in 1575. The painting seems immediately easy for modern viewers to reconcile with our understandings of scientific imagery. The subject of the painting seems rigidly still and far away, eliciting a detached and cool observation from viewers and promising the same from the artist. The artist used great skill and precision in painting to clearly depict minute textural detail and multiple views of the same object presumably to optimize information content. It is a convincing, informative depiction of what was an obviously well observed real world specimen. It seems clearly to mark a foray into a study of nature closer to what we might expect from scientists or botanists today¹, or equivalently from someone making art depicting the natural world around the time of a so called scientific revolution².

When one compares the depiction of the peach to botanical imagery in other genres many more obvious comparisons come to mind. It is easy to think that, obviously, the peach is better observed than the images one might find in the typical 16th century medieval herbal which Agnes Arber describes as largely “formal and decorative” “[having] to a great extent lost touch with nature” and “not profess[ing] to be more than an indication of certain distinctive features³.” The painting of the peach, owing to its blank background and foregrounded materiality, seems obviously far less symbolic than the equally naturalistic trompe l’oeil flowers and fruits adorning the golden borders of
many illuminated manuscripts. Obviously, one might think, the artworks are a complete departure from other works in the genre.

However, if a departure is to be found it is more subtle than this. Martin Kemp points out that in encountering artworks in natural history, particularly naturalistic artworks, the role of context becomes particularly important. We must always remember that we are “utterly dependent... on a complex interaction of prior knowledge, automatic expectation, illustrative technique, emotional context and the given framework of verbal information if we are able to read an image in a meaningful way.” In reading images and particularly those of plants we must be more careful. Despite their disparate context, general formal quality and level of abstraction, the works both in 16th century herbals and in illuminated manuscripts were both embedded into an ontological system wherein form, meaning, and being were all tied together. The user of the herbal and the reader of the manuscript both would have approached the flower images from an epistemological framework whereby knowledge and understanding of new things was constructed by pulling out of the new thing connection and similarity between it and something different, be that similarity formal, functional, or otherwise. But, for the medieval mind, similarity in one area brought with it similarity on all levels. An interpretive frame work such as this, one that collapses “the sign the signifier and the thing itself”, is what allows both herbals and border illustrations to do their jobs for their users. It is what allowed medieval readers to draw the connection between disparate objects, between moral values and flowers, between formal qualities of the herb and medicinal function, between abstracted image and real world plant.
With this common ground and informing context for botanical illustrations in the forms we see the most in the previous centuries in mind, certain choices in Le Moyne’s botanical works become entirely nontrivial in that they both request and reflect a shift in the expectations of viewers by the artist. Choices about how carefully to depict textural differences, how rigidly to adhere to conventions of lighting that communicate three-dimensionality and how much to invoke the viewer’s awareness of their own space and the spatial depth of the picture space signify the construction of new types of bodies for plants. This new type of body motivates and structures a different relationship between viewers and those bodies than the one in which viewers are seeking to inhere the body with some foreign meaning. Furthermore, changes in the kinds of bodies allow the Le Moyne himself to imagine and ask viewers to imagine different kinds of lives for these bodies. Lives with movement in the short and long term, lives wherein the bodies develop and the subjects build and sustain relationships with various parts of their own bodies, with the viewer, and with other entities in the frame.

If one takes a loose working definition of the word animacy from the introduction to Mel Chen’s study of contemporary attributions and definitions of animacy, as “a quality of agency, awareness, mobility, and liveness”\textsuperscript{9}, then the elements of plant representation which stand out most in comparison to earlier examples are those directly tied to the amount of animacy read from plants and brought to their depiction. As Chen points out, when we grant a subject higher levels of animacy, we begin to look for many previously occluded qualities in these subjects; qualities like autonomy, affect, mattering and identity\textsuperscript{10}. A representation which not only restores but which foregrounds animacy of plants is one which asks and expects viewers to find plants as interesting for
their growth, their bodies and their lives and in doing so allows for a separation from the meaning and symbolism inherent in their formal presence in centuries prior. In this respect, initial conclusions that Le Moyne’s painting of the peach is obviously vastly departed from artworks made in earlier years are more justified. These works are divested of the medieval brand of metaphor wherein plant images are interesting as signifiers for some distant signified.

But this break might not be so complete. One must ask, is so complete a transition from metaphor laden society possible so quickly? Might we instead consider the granting of animacy in Le Moyne’s work a whole new brand of metaphor? This new brand of metaphor would need to be one in which rather than being expected to use plants as tools to understand human life, viewers are now asked to bring human notions of time, and relationships to bare on their understanding and reading of plant imagery. Metaphorical or not, this new investment and departure from the medieval brand of metaphor leads to an investment in the sorts of questions that are being asked by communities studying the natural world in other arenas. The questions asked by the artist overlap with those of people looking at the natural world either for knowledge production and accumulation as with humanists and natural philosophers but curiously not for political, national and economic gain. The latter is particularly important when we consider that earlier in his career Le Moyne worked as an artist hired to document the flora of a French colonial expedition to Florida and South Carolina.

Furthermore, these more human investments entirely oppose potential assumptions of more detached, objective observation and interaction of the world. These human affective investments are the entry point for the artists into common
interests with botanists, natural philosophers, and explorers, the predecessors of those now practicing the presumed more objective detached science we now are able to read (unfairly) into some of Le Moyne’s works. These shared concerns include constructing and organizing systems, including, occluding and prioritizing different kinds of information, and optimizing description. Le Moyne’s botanical work allows a glimpse into the changing, complex, multifaceted stances of artists on themes and questions under discussion outside the realm of the art world.

I aim to study this shift in investments through the consideration of several sets of artworks all based on Le Moyne’s watercolors. I will be looking at 3 sets of works by Le Moyne and one by the Dutch artist Crispijn de Passe I. Of the three works by Le Moyne, two are collections of watercolors, the first a set of 59 drawings made in around 1575, and the second, a set of 50 made in England in 1585 for Lady Mary Sidney with some reprises of images from the earlier set. Le Moyne also produced a small hand colored pattern book of woodcuts, called la clef des champs whose designs largely derive from the earlier watercolor works. The final set is a book of engravings; Hortus Floridus, published in 1614 by the Dutch engraver, printer and publisher Crispijn de Passe I. The first four chapters of the book contain a scant few works engraved by de Passe’s son de Passe II in Utrecht. The book also contains an appendix, originally published as a standalone volume in 1605 in Cologne, that contains 113 prints all designed and engraved by de Passe I and modeled largely after Le Moyne.

Of the four sets executed by Le Moyne and the de Passe Family, all three later works contain images that bare visual similarity to works in the preceding sets. Some
copies are blatant, direct and thorough, others extract sections and implant them within larger compositions while others constitute visual riffing, remixing and modifying parts of previous illustrations. Of the more than 200 artworks in the four sets approximately one-third fall somewhere on a spectrum stretching from direct reprinting to nearly original design but only two subjects are copied exactly across all four sets. In following similar logic to that laid out by Kärin Nickelsen, in her study of copying in 18th century botanical artwork\textsuperscript{19}, the large number of copies which modify their templates, particularly in light of the few copies which do not, make it clear that these artists are making “active and conscious decisions” i.e. they are deliberately constructing artworks and not blindly transcribing as the term “copying” might suggest. Every preserved element is one that has been judged by the artist to be an effective solution for the problem at hand and all those discarded are those judged ineffective\textsuperscript{20}. Ultimately these four sets represent diverse takes on the same subject matter and will allow us to trace the interaction of different investments, takes and stakes in botanical artwork as outlined above with different technologies, and with different communities of production and consumption.

**Part One: From Bodies To Beings**

**Construction of Bodies**

The first work to be done is to understand the bodies built for viewers. What kinds of objects are viewers encountering and how are they meant to read them? In Le Moyne’s watercolors and de Passe’s book both artists work to make sure that the plants have physical presence. Both artists throughout their collections use their medium to communicate different qualities of surface and that the plants possess volume and occupy space. Le Moyne creates the illusion of surface in his 1585 watercolor set by
deftly building up layers of opaque and transparent pigment with attentive and precise brushwork often times using the trails left by individual bristles to create varieties of textures throughout his works. The depiction of citrus fruits in the 1575 watercolor sets showcases this ability (Figure 1.2). Le Moyne is able to paint the wet fibrous interior of a lemon, the wrinkled firm exterior and the smooth hard seeds of the lemon all within one image. Le Moyne then deftly navigates and employs tonal convention to promise that the surfaces which he has told us are textured, exist in three dimensions. They enclose interiors and recede into and push out of the plane of the page. Le Moyne does this through the construction of and adherence to a consistent lighting system. He lights each citrus fruit from the left and gradually shifts in tone from light to dark as he moves from left to right across the surface of the fruit, following the conventions dictating how one might expect light to fall over a volumetric body receding in three dimensions. The upper limit of the thoughtfulness and dedication to this scheme is manifested in the depiction of Grapes from the same watercolor set (Figure 1.3) where he follows one gradation pattern for each smaller rounded body while fitting each body into the scheme of the larger object of the whole. In addition to having concrete surface and occupying space Le Moyne in both watercolor sets structures his compositions to show viewers that the plants they see have mass. He shows stalks bending under the weight of flowers or fruit and frequently shows leaves folding underneath the weight of fruits that rest on them. On multiple levels always with consistent attention Le Moyne ensures that he follows pictorial convention and creates objects that fill space, have mass, have surfaces with a well defined boundary and tangibility, and visually behave as one might expect real world tangible three-dimensional objects to behave.
The construction of images of massive, volumetric objects seems entirely trivial until we once again consider, first, Arber's summary of 16th century herbal illustration, where she pointed out that spatial presence was exactly what was missing from many of the works, and second the construction of the plants physical presence within the other sets in question. Where Le Moyne is successful in his portrayal of volume and surface in his watercolors, both sets of printed work are less successful in convincing viewers of the materiality of the bodies of their plants. De Passe’s success in the depiction of bodies occupying multiple dimensions is sporadic. He attempts but is frequently unable to create the different tones that would be needed to communicate the differential fall of light on a rounded body. He frequently does not vary the spaces between hatching with sufficient subtlety to create different densities of white paper and dark ink that would produce the requisite gradation of tone. Tonal variation, the tool Le Moyne used so successfully to communicate shape, is outside de Passe’s reach. For example, his depiction of Olives and of Lemons in *Hortus Floridus* where there are effectively three tones, very dark, entirely uncolored and something in between, all clustered toward the exterior of the rounded fruits (Figure 1.4, Figure 1.5). As a result the fruits seem quite flat. However, his depiction of Pomegranate employs subtler transitions and successfully creates regions of lighter tone that appear to follow the surface of a curved body pushing back into the page (Figure 1.6). While de Passe repeatedly attempts to move beyond what seems a fundamental constraint of the medium and to use a binary system to create the illusion of a continuous tonal distribution, he does not always do so, and in this way undermines the effectiveness with which he communicates the shape of plant forms, frequently resulting in confusion
and difficulty in reading just how objects fill space.

Just as the volumetric identity of plants is at times unclear in de Passe’s work, so too is the presence and quality of their surface. De Passe cannot always successfully communicate texture, at times because of hastiness and an unwillingness to engrave with fine enough resolution or attention to produce a textural effect. Returning to the 1614 engraving of lemons (Figure 1.5) and noticing consider the dashed and quick allusion to the texturing so deftly communicated by Le Moyne through a variety of types of brushstrokes makes clear an example of this inattention. De Passe’s technical vocabulary at this point in his career seems unable to cope with the multiplicity of brush technique employed by Le Moyne. The vocabulary is not entirely outside the realm of engraving as we see by looking at the works made later and included in the same collection (Figure 2.10), so it is most likely a matter of skill or priority. At other times this lack of textural information is due to the difficulty of communicating overlap and transparency in a medium that has only ink and paper and relies on the paper both as background and as a component of the image itself. This requisite multitasking sometimes creates confusion between layers and bodies.

Despite momentary lapses from clarity into confusion, De Passe is overall more successful and more adamant in his attempts at communicating volume and surface, two important criteria for judging material presence of his plants, than is Le Moyne in his printed work. Le Moyne’s woodcuts of plants refuse to use the lines of the woodcuts themselves to elucidate textural features or to the interaction of the object with light. The lines of the woodcut are frequently used to delineate bodies, to outline details but seldom venture into the interior of outlined forms and never do so to describe surface
texture. Le Moyne relies very heavily on the coloring to do this work for him as we can see in comparing the colored versions to the outlines (Figure 1.7, Figure 1.8)\(^{21}\). Frequently the coloring is successful in describing the difference between hard and supple twig or between husk and exterior (Figure 1.9) but often times this trust in color is misplaced as hasty coloring in few or single layers with exclusively transparent paint frequently covering multiple objects with one stroke glosses over subtleties in texture from the original as in the pink applied to the petals of the daisy (Figure 1.8). The same can be said for teaching viewers about the spatial presence of the plants in the woodcuts.

All three sets, in some capacity, allude to their object’s material, tangible, and spatial presence, an attempt that we seldom see in medieval herbals produced around Le Moyne’s time. But largely because of technological constraints, the watercolors are far more convincing in their portrayal of surface and material body making the physicality of their subject matter unavoidable. Materiality is a fundamental aspect of dictating the expectations and viewpoints viewers take toward the subjects. Inconsistencies in lighting system and struggles with the technology in the printed work create plant bodies that flicker in and out of material physicality as one moves through the collection. Without material presence at stake it becomes more difficult to ask viewers to consider the sorts of things we will come to find that the watercolors bring up. The printed works create, at moments, plants that have a pure visual presence highlighting more decorative uses of plants. This is ideal for a pattern book but more puzzling in an appendix to a book that highlights the role of a garden through the season.
The construction of material bodies need not by default bring with it notions of animacy. It would be possible for Le Moyne’s watercolors to build plants as objects with well defined physical properties and to proceed in considering them from there; as objects. This approach would indeed mesh well with what one might imagine to be a more scientific approach to the study and depiction of the plant world. However, this is not the approach we see to the bodies Le Moyne has painted in his watercolors. He instead, moves on to ask questions of himself and of his viewers about how plants are defined as beings. How animate are they? How do they move, in space (i.e. into and through the spaces into which they have been built) and in time (i.e. in development and state)? What kinds of relationships are they capable of sustaining? In short, what components of animacy are they allowed?

**Mobility In Space and Time**

Both de Passe and Le Moyne try out different allowances of movement for their plant subjects. Both artists produce images in which plants are mobile in space and in time, in development and in position. But, both produce others that are left still and stagnant neither dead nor alive. Plants are at times depicted as able-bodied entities able to affect change and to strike up relationships between their own different parts as well as with external entities and at others are entities not quite alive and not quite dead; isolated from other beings and from the space around them.

Introducing the question of mobility introduces the questions of time scale. If these plants are to be considered mobile then how quickly do they move, and for how long? How long must viewers observe them to see motion, change and growth? Le Moyne’s later watercolor set harmonizes and rewards long term and short term observation and
development. He frequently prioritizes arrangements that imbue paintings with a sense of frenetic, high frequency vibration. This becomes clear in the choices made in his 1585 image of the peach (Figure 1.10). As is characteristic of the set as a whole, Le Moyne builds this plant’s stems and leaves from curves, curves that here feed into one another and create a vibrant swirling around the central cluster of fruit. Le Moyne leaves just enough white space between successive leaves that viewers can easily picture the space being bridged by a subtle extension of the lines that are drawn. These imagined jumps across the page and between leaves guide the eye cyclically from one leaf to another in a potentially never-ending circuit. But at the same time that there is harmony between curves, there is a sense of frenetic flurry, created by the bending up of the leaves, by the refusal to perfectly copy the shapes of leaves and by the insistence on the use of curves which are not entirely smooth, curves which wiggle. The imperfect similarity between the leaves creates an interrupted repetition that never allows the viewer to really settle and get stable within the composition. This instability comes at the hands of the plant and, in addition transforming the body into something which moves of its own accord, gives it the ability to insight an effect in the viewer.

Another strategy with similar effects to the movement and sense of instability is Le Moyne’s use of tension. He repeatedly selects arrangements where parts of the plant are feathered or stretched apart, or curved in opposite directions, placing concave curves next to convex ones. These situations seem to require a lot of energy to sustain, imbuing the image again with dynamism, and, additionally, with a sense of temporariness. With the promise that these situations require energy to sustain comes the promise that this energy will soon run out. Through creating tension, Le Moyne asks
viewers to consider the break or release of tension, the moment immediately following the scene that we see. And with the break of tension viewers break free of the moment at hand and are asked to consider the moments that follow, and what will happen, in those moments, to the plant they are encountering.

The creation of a moment that cannot possibly last, in the short term, is augmented by the inclusion of insects and in particular, flying insects. For insects, the state of flying requires constant, high frequency motion. Either they will continue to flap their wings or they will fall. In either case the state of the system at the next moment is forced to evolve from its current state and we are forced to consider that evolution just by the insect’s presence within the same space.

It is worth pausing here to note my assumption of Le Moyne using insects as a tool to imply motion within the realm of plant life relies on a very basic but perhaps unwarranted assumption: that we can read the plants as belonging to the same space, the same narrative world as that of the insects. At times this question is unclear as there are frequently instances in which insects are detached from the plant they accompany, they cast no shadows, do not appear to make physical contact with the plant itself. Both Le Moyne and de Passe often include insects without giving signs that they are organically bound to the same system as the plants i.e. that they are not excerpted from another system and implanted. Such a divorced relationship between plant and insect can be seen in the floating dragonfly at the top right of the image of a Dog Violet in the 1585 watercolors. (Figure 1.11) The insect is relegated to the corner of the frame, shown relatively large compared to the plant and shown apparently from above and even slightly flattened. It is not a far reach to imagine the insect has landed on the
preexisting image even at a different distance to the viewer than the plant itself.

However, more frequently than Le Moyne employs this floating and detached insect-plant relationship, he builds some tension between insect and plant into his paintings. At times the tension is in color, when the color palette of the insects forms a dynamic opposition, as is the case with the bright pastel blue of the butterfly set against the pastel pink of the Mallow in the 1585 set (Figure 1.12), or forms a companion as one sees in the subtle mimicry of the tone of the red rose in the red under-wings of the moth in the French Rose from the same set (Figure 1.13), to the plant itself. At others the tension is formal where we see insects oriented toward or around the plant, with limbs barely skimming the plant or stretching out but denying that same contact as with the dragonfly in the rendition of a Thistle (Figure 1.14), or invoking a phantom touch through transparency of a wing or antennae (a relationship far too delicate to be sustained in the print media and a wonderful example of which is given in the wings of the insect in the painting of an oak (Figure 1.15). Regardless of the method, across the collection as a whole, if not in every example, Le Moyne constructs awareness between plant and insect that allows us to consider them as operating within the same narrative frame.

This very awareness between plant and insect is in itself another privilege made possible by an animacy invested representation of plants. The ability to relate “to affect and be affected” is one which one does not find promised in other illustrations (despite the suggestion in herbals by the textual descriptions of medicinal roles of plants accompanying their illustration). The notion of awareness exists not only in the relationship between insects but between constituent parts of plants. Le Moyne communicates awareness between parts of the plant both through composition as in the
1585 depiction of cucumber (Figure 1.16) where there is overlap and two competing curves building tension and force between disparate bodies. This method of relation is preserved in the later woodcuts but does not appear in the earlier watercolors which more frequently selects compositions with single bodies. Le Moyne also pays attention to shadow (a detail often omitted in both Le Moyne and de Passe’s printed work) and ensures that when one part of the plant impedes the path of light to another part of the plant the latter portion falls in shadow. In this way again Le Moyne promises and is aware of affect and communication between different points of the plants, lending them yet another trait inherent in an animacy laden representation.

To return to the line of thought from which we took a digression; the inclusion of insects in the paintings is one of many ways that Le Moyne structures his images around a temporary state. He makes it impossible to consider his plants without considering motion and vibrancy. This motion and vibrancy is used to break viewers free of the present moment and construct the plants as living, moving and changing through time.

**Directing Mobility**

Le Moyne not only asks viewers to consider more than one moment in time, and what the plants will be doing in these moments, but also provides clues as to what might happen therein. He brings the future moment into the frame by creating mobility for plants in the means we described above and then populates those future moments. In particular, he frequently choses to describe how the plant will develop and grow in time. The notion of movement in space is by default tied to the consideration of time and Le Moyne makes this connection explicit by frequently pairing the movement of viewer's
eyes across the page or of the plant through space with, the successive encounter of developmental stages of the plants that vary in time. For example, in the 1585 rendition of Hollyhock (Figure 1.17), the buds open as the viewer’s eyes move along the curve from top to bottom. In the Madonna lily from the same set flower buds boom as they rotate around the stalk. Breaking us free from considering one image as one moment allows us to imagine these images as consolidating and allowing us to explore the growth and development of plants. It effectively animates the plants and suggests not only that they will move, but how they will move and how they will change. Le Moyne first suggests that time steps after the one viewers are experiencing exist and then choses to populate that suggested time with different states of the plants growth. He steers the viewers’ imaginative interaction into the direction of plant growth and development.

In addition to breaking his subjects free from the present developmental moment Le Moyne also ensures they are not confined to the present space. Le Moyne establishes the frame as a physical and formal boundary by allowing it to cut off forms as we see in the leaves at the upper left and center of the image of the quince (Figure 1.20) or by having forms barely skim along it developing a tension with the frame as we see in the leaves at the bottom right of the frame while at the same time frequently allowing forms to extend over the frame as with the fruit on the right side. This play with the edge defines a boundary between viewer and the plants while also identifying it as one that can be breeched. Le Moyne, we know, has set up consideration of the moment immediately following the one shown now, and in addition to promising and providing information about the long term developmental motion of the plants, promises more
immediate spatial movement for the plants out of their space and in to the viewer’s space. It is entirely possible and probable that, in this moment yet to come, the plants will move forward past the boundary between the viewer’s space, the real world, and the space of the plants. Movement in their world is quite able to turn into movement in our world.

In this later watercolor set Le Moyne takes bodies that are apparently materially present, and introduces temporality to this materiality. He structures his paintings in a way that viewers are asked to consider the future for the plants within his frame. This in and of itself is not unique in botanical illustration, as the flowers and insects in many Tromp Loei’l border illustrations appear to wriggle and hover above the page.23 What is in fact more distinctive and more of a departure is the request that viewers imagine more carefully and closely what might happen in these future moments. Le Moyne not only requests and expects this imaginative entrance to the images but guides it in a specific direction in the direction of concerns which make plants seem not as objectively observed, dethatched subjects, but more as animate beings. He asks us to consider their lives and their growth, their relationships both with members of the natural world and with us as viewers, their agency. He foregrounds the elements of their complex temporal lives which make them seem alive, and specifically in the cases of development and growth, spells out explicitly what the next stages of that temporal life will be.

**Mobility Undermined**

The complexity of temporal life built in the 1585 watercolors is not sustained in the woodcuts or the engravings. In both printed sets, repeated attempts to consolidate
composition to fit the smaller space and the abilities of the medium disrupt the flow of elements and do not facilitate complex an interactions between the parts of the frame. Furthermore De Passe’s choice to remove insect life24 from the frame undercuts one of the devices that aided in breaking out of the present temporal moment in the watercolors. As a consequence of their physical production, engraved images float on a white ground free of frame and border. This technological constraint removes access to the device of framing, a device key to the communication of motion in the 1585 watercolors. In the engravings border is implied, at times more strongly than others, but is not physically realized. Furthermore, borders are fundamentally unable to be crossed since they exist only as the difference between the plants and the ground behind them. Then there is no threat of the plants in the printed works encroaching on our own territory. They are safely contained in the sizable sea of white paper separating the images from the edge. The printed works present views of plants as things that might move, but do not really. They seem oddly fixed with the potential for movement but do not fully motivate that assumption in viewers and so miss out on much of the force of animacy in Le Moyne’s watercolor. The threat of encroachment of affecting change on the viewer’s world and the viewer is no longer at stake here.

The 1575 works for the most part have the same short-term vibrancy that those in the 1585 set do. If we look at the 1575 depiction of chamomile (Figure 1.18), one that is very much typical of other depiction of flowers in the set, it becomes clear that Le Moyne is employing some of the moves that he retains in the later set. We see this elsewhere in the set as Feathered fronds and textured leaves bend away from one another and twist in different directions creating a similar tension, which implies
vibration in the short term. He furthers this by his frequent choice to arrange bunches of flowers spread out all the way across the page. As with the later set he chooses within these arrangements to include buds in various states of opening. But, instead of ordering these states or pairing them with formal arrangements that imply progression, he spreads them throughout the page and throughout the flowers, creating a diffuse arrangement that allows viewers to view the image in no particular order. This again imbues the image with the same sense of short term potential for movement directly at the expense of the long-term concerns that Le Moyne builds in and has become aware of in the set painted ten years later.

However, if we return instead to the 1575 rendition of the peach (Figure 1.1), importantly while keeping in mind its partner in the later set, we encounter a difference between the kinds of movement imagined in the two sets. The 1575 peach maintains the same tension between parts. The curve of the primary branch implies twisting and the arches of the leaves at the top which curve and stretch away from each other imply stretching. However, the implications of long-term change\textsuperscript{25}, although not foregrounded, in the later image, are substantially confused here. Le Moyne depicts the fruit as centered, well contained within the frame, and effectively distant from the viewer, especially in comparison to the tightly framed almost compressed counterpart from the 1585 image. The fruit has no reason or means to move beyond the page and this in combination with the proposed distance from the viewer creates a composition that is as a whole far more stable than the original with its leaves traversing and pushing at the boundaries of the frame. He does not attribute to the peach the same ability to affect and to move, denying one of the key elements that invests the later images with a
sense of animacy and personal investment for viewers.

Furthermore, Le Moyne has painted this plant as attached to a cut stem. The bottom of the plant tapers to a pointed, distinctly lined, edge with an indented, concave wound at the bottom of a dried branch. If we attempt to imagine the plant as having a life beyond this moment, and if we attempt to consider this life as the life of a real world, natural peach, it is difficult to do so when it is missing a fundamental aid to its livelihood; the rest of the tree. There is no real future we can imagine for this plant, and the others in the set who are shown as cut off from the rest of the plant, other than decay from this current state and, ultimately, death; that is if we are not to consider the fruit dead already.

The livelihood and livingness of such plants in the given moment then is even called into question, as while they might currently be still in bloom, they are again taken from the context that would allow them to be alive. In the specific case of the peach, even the plants’ being alive in this moment is called into question by the choice to render the plant in cross section at the bottom. It is questionable as to how we are meant to read this plant. Is this literally a second plant? Or a visual rendering of what is implicitly inside the plant that we are already shown above? Regardless of how exactly we read it in relation to the other view of the peach, in the context of all the other choices and in the context of other plant imagery, it seems hard to really consider the plants shown in cross section as viable and lively if not because of the cross section than because of the other representational choices, and it certainly does not motivate in particular a reading of the other plant as biologically viable. This set of concerns, despite being tied to the stripping away of mobility, the very element which facilitated
understanding of livingness in the previous set, is one which is still very affectively charged. The quality of life for a plant and where exactly to draw the line between life and death are highly relevant to human understandings, so in this regard again the viewers are asked to interpret the temporal life of the plant in terms of animacy related parameters. However this set differs in that, in this regard at least, Le Moyne is not nearly so explicit about the future of the plant. The image of the peach is fraught with ambiguity in a way that the later set is not.

The ambiguity introduced by the depiction of plants in cross section and other such abstracted graphical devices is entirely done away with in the printed works. Neither artist saw fit to preserve representational strategies that called for multiple views and allowing for views inside. Plants in the 1614 text at times do introduce the notion of plants as dead by the depiction of clipped stems but more often than not fade the bottoms out instead. Alternatively, the pattern books avoid this question by having plants enter from outside the frame as they primarily do in the 1585 set. Thus in the printed works questions about livingness or deadness of plants are not foregrounded and are removed from the discussion and interpretation framing the images.

Plants as Beings

While artists are inconsistent in the lives and bodies they give their plants, they are consistent in how they direct focus and attention to plants, particularly in comparison to previous genres. I mean attention, first, quite literally in terms of what viewers are actually given to look at. All plants are presented in the center of the frame and on white backgrounds. When insects accompany plants, additions largely stripped out in the later printed works, the bugs are designed decidedly as compliments to the plants. Their
accessory nature is indicated both through color choices and composition relative to the plants. The images are largely without text, however, in the cases where text is introduced it is minimal, only the plants name. The 1575 watercolors when they have names introduced are hard to even find on the page due to the color. All other descriptive work is left to the image of the plant itself (Figure 1.19). Viewers are relating visually to recreations of the plants bodies centrally and not peripheral to other images or to textual descriptions.

The second priority in focus is somewhat subtler, and arises when we compare these works again to previous works. One might reflexively say that Le Moyne and de Passe ask viewers, through the literal focus and through the kinds of animacy laden concerns they raise, to consider plants as plants themselves where previous artworks do not, rather than concepts or medicinal aids. But, to viewers grounded in the epistemological framework I discussed at the beginning of this paper, considering a plant’s metaphorical resonance or medicinal properties would have been equivalent to studying the plants themselves. If we are more careful, the shift in focus of these collections is instead to plants’ materiality, bodies, development, and life, categories we have subsumed under the category of animacy. These categories mesh more easily with notions of what it is to us today to study biology and the natural world. But the ways into studying animacy are often pitted against and paired with human concerns, and so a study of natural phenomena comes not through detachment but through attachment and human, affective engagement.

To engage with plants in this way and to pay attention to their animacy requires that viewers enter into the images from a different framework than the default requested
of the works in other genres. The connections viewers are asked to make in order to read plants in this way calls for and rewards imagination of parts of the plants bodies and lives, temporality and making both implicit and explicit connections in all areas. This shift of expectation in the viewer, in Le Moyne’s watercolors in particular, is the means by which close attention and study of the images and by extension of elements relevant to biological plant life themselves is requested and facilitated. In this sense, the work I have done thus far justifies and motivates the investigation of these artworks in terms of the questions being asked by those directly studying the natural world outside the artist’s studio. With the previous analysis in mind, I intend now to shift to discussing these works in terms of their overlap with the concerns of those in communities of botanists, natural philosophers in humanists, and scientific thought today.

**Part Two: Study of the Natural world**

**Information**

In looking at these artworks in terms of the concerns of knowledge building communities, several parallels become apparent. The artists ask themselves, and ask viewers questions about how to organize and build knowledge about the natural world, how general to be in describing the natural world and how to experience and receive depictions of the natural word. These questions can be read specifically in choices about what visual information and how much these artworks ought to contain, how to construct and organize systems of plants, how the viewer and artists are positioned relative to the artwork and to the subjects themselves, along with the intended audience and viewing context compounded with the pretense and promises made by these artworks.
The first question that becomes important is exactly what information the artists aim to provide. Nickelsen describes the development of botanical works in the late 18th century. Many of these works exist in a post Linnaean world wherein botanical taxonomy was defined in terms of visualize-able properties, such as the numbers of different organs, the visibility of certain parts etc.26 A great deal of the work of these later botanical artworks ends up being to streamline information and description relevant in deciding plant’s place in taxonomy. Nickelsen also points out just how important and present “taxonomically irrelevant” information is to the function of plant artworks, information like overall impression, or environment27. In a Pre-Linnaean world wherein there are no unified formal categories of information needed to catalogue plants Le Moyne is lacking a major source of guidance as to which information to include in his depictions. Surely due at least in part to this, one can see a large variety of information which he foregrounds in his sets.

In the earlier watercolor set Le Moyne often displays parts of the plant that might otherwise be unseen. The Painting of a walnut in this set (Figure 2.1) displays much of what is characteristic about the informational strategy of this set. Le Moyne at various moments in this set prioritizes allowing viewers to see what they might not be able to see at first glance in person or from one specimen in person and what they definitely cannot see in the other botanical sets based on Le Moyne. The depiction of the walnut gives multiple views of the same part of the plant, walking the viewer through various layers of the seed. Le Moyne depicts the walnut whole in its husk, in its shell and (perhaps in the form at the bottom left obscured by heavy oxidation) the nut itself. He reprises all this information all at once by giving the schematic view of the nut in cross
section, a view which one would be hard-pressed to come by in reality and exists only as visual a diagram\textsuperscript{28}. But as we saw in looking at the painting of the peach from this same set, constructing the plant in this way opens up ambiguities regarding the living status of the plant. There is ambiguity as to how the schematized depictions relate to the main body of the plant (Are they multiple views of the same part of the plant? Are we seeing a simultaneous moment pulled apart and dissected? Do they belong to the same space and world or time? ) and how we are to define the life of the plant being depicted (are all of the pieces living? Do they occupy the same narrative world or moment?). Then Le Moyne in this and other paintings makes visible and conceptualizes the invisible interiors of plants in an easy to digest visible form, but he does so at the expense of clarity of narrative information and unity of plant life, an expense which all of the other sets aim to spare.

This trend of visually providing information about things that might otherwise be invisible is continued in the recurring depiction of root systems throughout the set. Le Moyne in his earliest watercolor set frequently shows plants as uprooted with the entirety of their underground structure exposed (Figure 2.2). Roots are another visual element cut out of Le Moyne’s later work but sporadically incorporated through the images in de Passe’s book. The parts of the book designed and engraved later by de Passe II, in particular, frequently use this strategy although still depict the plants as planted and growing even while showing roots.

In addition to providing seemingly exhaustive information by way of incorporating many views of the plants in question, particularly views in which the plant’s hidden interior is exposed, Le Moyne seems to include exhaustive information in terms of just
how much detail he paints. While both sets of watercolors create distinctively material presences for their bodies, the presence for plants in Le Moyne’s later sets is frequently more detailed. The moth at the top of the strawberry is startling in just how much detail it is painted in, with apparently every hair carefully drawn in (Figure 2.3). Similarly in millet (Figure 2.4) countless small pods on the fronds of the plant are depicted, each catalogued in equivalent detail. The density of brushstrokes and anatomical elements give the images a descriptive force unparalleled in other images in that one can look closely and carefully at the images and is often times rewarded with information. This rule is far from absolute as paint handling is at times clumsy, as we see in the roots of the Lily of the Valley (Figure 2.5), with thin layers of paint not quite reaching out to the heavy outline of the roots. There are instances where application of paint is less than careful somewhat breaking the illusion of exhaustive cataloguing of detail, instances which happen less often in the later watercolor set whose brushstrokes nearly always seem applied with precision, control and purpose.

The seemingly exhaustive, detailed information about the physical bodies of plants contained in the 1575 watercolor set is largely removed in the later sets. The ambiguity inducing visual devices (e.g. the cross section), which abandon unified bodily structures in lieu of adding information, are entirely done away with in later sets. Furthermore, Le Moyne is more lenient in his cataloguing of minute fine resolution details. This difference is made apparent in comparing the 1575 version of Medlar (Figure 2.6) to the 1585 version (Figure 2.7). The 1575 collection makes quite clear the connection between the husk of the fruit and the interior of the fruit. He finely outlines the edge of each husk in a darker brown and introduces shadows of the exterior falling on the interior. He also,
adds detailed texture to the darkened shadowed interior of the fruit, making it quite clear just where the outside ends and the inside begins. Each part of the plant has a sharpness of focus to it making it easy to get caught up in close study of individual parts of the plant’s anatomy. There is far more ambiguity surrounding just what is happening in the center of the fruits in the 1585 version. In the later edition, edges of the husk blur slightly, and there is no finite boundary where exterior husk turns to interior. The interior is largely one smooth stroke of brown with sharp and wiry hairs coming off of its top. As a result of these choices, the image has a pastel finish over the whole piece (characteristic of many of the works in the collection as a whole) creating a more unified and soft image. There is ambiguity about how specifically the different parts of the whole relate to each other, but not about the fact that they are unified, part of one presence. This unity comes at the expense of explicitly spelling out the physical presence and definition of the fruit. I mentioned earlier that Le Moyne to a larger extent in the later watercolors than the earlier set depicts plants in multiple states of blooming and forcefully suggests a sequential development from one to another. This process through time but assumption that we are still looking at the same being is facilitated by the unity of presence achieved by omitting sharp distinctions in anatomy. Then the omission of these particular details is the means by which Le Moyne provides and gives authority to another area of information, information regarding the plants growth and change in development. The blooming order and states of plant is information useful to people studying plants for many purposes and is provided in Le Moyne’s later set, more than in the earlier one.

The impulse to omit, to allow viewers to fill in anatomical information, is evident
Dill, 28 through the collection. There is an act of interpretation in figuring out just how the two parts relate to one another and viewers must fill in the blanks imaginatively. This imaginative extrapolation is of a different type than the imagination required to put back together the deconstructed plants in the 1575 set. Where the earlier set foregrounds information about the physical anatomy of the plant at the expense of creating a more unified presence plant and adding information about long term change and identity, the later set does just the opposite. It exchanges information about the specific body parts of the plant for a more cohesive visual understanding of the being as a whole.

Similar sacrifices occur in Le Moyne’s printed work, although these seem largely at the hands of technology and the need to simplify compositions into lines, we lose so much of the information given by thin brush strokes and differences in the handling of painted application. De Passe still seems to pay more attention to copying details in his work than Le Moyne does in the woodcuts e.g. in daisy (Figure 2.8). The information about different states of the plants throughout time is still present but less forcefully explicit about order and progression between them.

While the printed works cut back on certain forms of visual information, namely the complex temporal lives of plants as well as the details of their physical presence they do introduce information through the device of labeling. Both the books include the names of the plants in Latin, English and French (the Hortus Floridus also includes German) with the illustration. In this way a vital piece of information needed for classification is standardized and foregrounded in the depictions. This information is less conducive to visual communication. The 1575 watercolors do have text with the names of the plants and occasionally the names of the bugs, perhaps added by a later hand, but it is not
present on every painting and when it is it easily goes unseen (Figure 1.19).

The introduction of labeling brings with it promises of a classificatory function of the images themselves. The introduction of a name of a species or type ties the specific images and the bodies to a more general class. However the generality or specificity of the information that these paintings are meant to convey is far from clear. I discussed earlier the 1575 rendition of the walnut and the schematized imagined view of the interior of the walnut itself. The existence of the cross section as a diagrammatic device, one which abstractly represents essential features, would seem to promise there is something more universal about that representation. It is difficult to reconcile this with the holes in the leaf on the branch to which the branch is attached. The generality promised by an obviously constructed schematic representation is opposed by the particularity promised by flaw. Flaws are more present in the 1575 set than in the 1585 set but they still exist in the later. They are largely occluded in the 1614 images. These works blur the boundary between specific and general and this is perhaps part of their service to the field and identity in a world pre Linnaeus where general has not quite been defined.

It is worth noting, in addition to how much these artworks inform, just how much information they occlude. For example absolute scale is confused in all works. The inclusion of a massive dragonfly in dog violet (Figure 1.11) at ambiguous distance from the viewer makes it hard to read just how big the buds are relative to the bug. Furthermore the pairing of different plants of different sizes next to each other on the same page in both the printed books makes it clear that there is no universal scale adopted throughout representations. We are not necessarily to assume that the walnuts
on the page next to the melon in *la clef de champs* are the same size, but we are given no device by which to gauge how much each image has zoomed in (Figure 2.9).

Another glaring area of missing information is that of biological, spatial context, the environment in which these things thrive. This information would be vitally important to perhaps expedition artwork or to people interested in commodifying plants. Le Moyne’s earlier work is entirely devoid of any information about context of plants. They are depicted on blank backgrounds, backgrounds that for the most part (with the exception of the few images that cast shadows on the white ground) do not interact with the plants in anyway. The spatial context of these plants, often times even the full bodies of the plants, is never explicitly given in the watercolors but is often times added in by de Passe’s printed work. The *Hortus Floridus* too in the parts of the book produced by de Passe II is far more explicit about context spelling out that these things are grown in a garden and drawing the plants planted in the ground (Figure 2.10). The context in the group of works from 1605 is more ambiguous in that there are small vignettes and people, land and insects that are added to the plants but they often float detached from the space and seem to lack any real assertion of being the spatial biological context for the plant. The landmass in the center of the frame with Lemon and carnation (Figure 2.11) seems removed and floating. It is enough to suggest that the plants belong to some outside natural world but not enough to communicate just how they do so. There is also more integrated addition of landmass in the form of backgrounds or ground for the plants as we see in the well-shaded strip of land at the bottom of Chamomile and Barberis (Figure 2.12). At times, De Passe in the appendix takes this integration far enough to undo some of the attempts Le Moyne, makes aims to deliberately cut out the
context of the plant. Le Moyne’s watercolors often show the body as literally cut from its parent plant. De Passe several times throughout the collection depicts plants which clearly appeared in the earlier set to be cut and trimmed to be planted in the ground as we see in the engraving of the cherry (Figure 2.13). In his engraving of the cherry De Passe has done this even though it does not make anatomical sense. One would never find the branch of a cherry tree growing straight from the ground. Then there is some information about context in so far as plants as things that grow from the earth but it is at the expense and even possible confusion about information about just how plants grow and are structured.

Ultimately, there is deliberate trade off across collections in what information artists emphasize and what information artists occlude. This information content is a direct consequence of the particular imaginative framework or stance with respect to the image that artists ask their viewers to take. Some imaginative processes are rewarded while others are not greeted with concrete answers or end points.

**Systems**

The work that I have done thus far has set up and interrogated these works in terms of their treatments of individuals. But proceeding in this way skips over something glaringly obvious about these works. They are not 270 individual artworks. They are four sets. At the same time that each plant is drawn as an individual in complexity and in detail, viewers are quite literally, as a product of the works’ physical and spatial context, unable to conceive of or to encounter one image without the 50 or more others that accompany it. By creating these works as sets, the artists have ensured experience of one image is always in the context of those that surround it creating a complex network
of relationships between the works in the collection. They have built a complex visual network or system. Constructing a visual system, whose constituents are all of the things we have described above; considered in light of the real world counterparts and relational capacity, asks us to consider biological systems as well. The notion of the system, both biological and visual is one fraught with questions; questions for artists, humanists, explorers, nations and natural philosophers alike. What scale of system is it most beneficial or valuable to consider? How does one organize a system? What constituents ought to be included and which ones discarded?

What systemic scales do both artists find relevant? Even if we attempt to simplify the problem by, for a moment, returning to consideration of artworks as individuals, there are many scales at work. As I have described above, the individual paintings in Le Moyne’s 1575 work largely offer plants as isolated and safely contained within their frame. In addition to arguing for a level of stability and stagnation, this choice also imbues images with a sense of completeness. If there is some other part of the plant to be considered beyond what is shown we are not given a means to imagine what that might be. The 1575 depiction of a Lily of the Valley (Figure 2.5) shows the flower, leaves stalks and roots all in one frame. The flower buds just barely skim the top of the frame and the bottom of the roots are very slightly cut off at the bottom, meaning that a very narrow sliver of the page is actually used to depict the flower. The inefficient use of page space, the likes of which we certainly do not see in the later watercolor set or printed works, indicates that Le Moyne’s priority here is to fit as much of the plant into the frame as possible; to use the space in a way that will allow him to show plants from roots to buds, from top to bottom; a complete specimen. This set is distinct from the
later watercolors in how frequently its works depict the root system of plants, but this is not a prerequisite for arguing completeness. Images of parts of plants that are depicted with their stems cut have a similar effect. Le Moyne chooses in most, but not all, images in the 1575 set that show their subjects as separated from the main plant to show their bottoms as curled and slightly concaved i.e. as if they have been cut (Figure 2.14). This is in contrast to the more rare but not unprecedented choice to fade into the bottoms of plants (Figure 2.15) or have them enter from the exterior (Figure 2.16). The choice to cut rather than to fade places a sharp edge on the beginning and end of the plant body and dissuades our consideration of the plant’s body beyond the frame. Plants with their stems cut are resolutely separated from the rest of their plant and we are asked to consider just the specimen as it is shown here and not what is beyond the frame.

In the 1575 depiction of the melon (Figure 2.17) Le Moyne details with fine and controlled brushwork all the fibrous pulpy connections of the flesh inside the melon as well as its attachment to the individual seeds. He centers this dark slice and paints it in relatively dark tones in contrast to the high white texturing on the convex exterior, effectively drawing viewers in to the recesses of the fruit and rewarding them with detail. Such intensely caring and detailed description and communication of the differences in textures of different material parts of flowers runs rampant through the collection and even spills over into the depiction of insects as well. The harmonious partnering of such intense description with the strong implications of completeness result in images like the Water chestnut (Figure 2.18), where the plant we are encountering appears not only as a complete entity, but as a complete multipart connected system. He is presenting a system on the scale of the individual in a way that is not always preserved in later sets.
The 1585 set of watercolors certainly preserves, and even improves, the promises of connectedness of components from the 1575 set. As was mentioned earlier, Le Moyne is extremely adept at using his handling of the paint to communicate the differences between textures. However, in the 1585 set one is struck by just how much care is taken in communicating how one texture transitions into another. The 1585 Bullace (Figure 2.19) is a particularly impressive example of his use of soft blending between colors to communicate soft bending branches and strategic and subtle use of hard outline to communicate knobbed connections between gnarled branch and stem of leaf or between stem and fruit. In some ways this takes the work of the 1575 collection and amplifies it. He not only paints the different textures but pays even more careful attention to their connectedness and the transitions which occur between them. One must note however that this attention to connectedness is not universal. There are cases, as I mentioned above in the case of the Borage and Medlar, to name two, where connections are not explicit and are skipped over. But this is in itself with the goal of tying together disparate parts and does not undermine the notion of the individual as a system. My point in discussing connectedness is that when the attention focused on connection between different parts, as it frequently is, it is startlingly clear, prioritized and largely successful.

He does not however make the same claims to the completeness of the individuals that he does in the earlier set. 45 of the 50 images in the 1585 set depict their subjects as entering from external to the frame. In light of the fact that Le Moyne has built his frame as a flexible barrier that viewers are repeatedly asked to imagine plants transgressing, the choice to have the vast majority of plants enter from outside the
frame translates to a repeated reminder that there are portions of plants that are not shown in the frame. What is in the frame is a small-scale system of interacting parts, but it is not complete. The bodies of these plants are worthy of inspection but there is more information about them to be had by searching outside of the frame.

As discussed above, de Passe’s work is incapable of constructing and playing with the frame in the same way that Le Moyne’s does in his later watercolor set due to the physical limitations of engravings. This does not, however, mean that his plants are not informed by what is outside the frame. While Le Moyne motivates bringing the world outside the individual to bear on the individual by claiming that the plant’s body extends beyond the frame, de Passe does so through the assumptions under which we enter the text as a whole. The entire premise of the *Hortus Floridus* (although not necessarily for the *Altera Pars*) is to present a garden moving through the seasons of the year. Then our encounter with each image is predicated upon our understanding of it as but one part of a larger whole. This whole is explicitly stated at the beginning of the collection in the dedication as well as at the beginning of each chapter through an engraving of the garden for each season. So, throughout the book as a whole viewers are guided through and oriented within the larger-scale systemic context in which to consider the images being shown. The larger systemic scale and context is made explicit.

We can ask similarly what the scopes of Le Moyne’s collections as entities are. Though it is not stated explicitly within the collections the large-scale scope ends up being primarily the same for all collections. The plants of Le Moyne’s collection are all those which are commonly found in 16th century English gardens, although they vary in the length of time they have been commonly available in England. For example, the
French Marigold entered into English Gardens with the influx of French citizens fleeing the Bartholomew’s day massacre, while the Clove Pinks is one of the oldest flowers in England, native to the country. Then even though it is possible to reduce and categorize the scope of the system geographically it is difficult to do so historically, with the historical associations of the plants in the system ranging from as old as England to as young as Le Moyne’s own presence in the country. Despite the breadth of scope, its exact nature is not explicitly stated in any of Le Moyne’s work. He instead leaves it to the viewer’s experiential knowledge to be able to make the connection and impose that organizational structure on the works given to them. As with many other things, what Le Moyne chooses to allow to remain implicit, imposed by an act of imagination or interpretation on the part of the viewer, de Passe has made explicit in the construction of his set. Both collectors have chosen to turn to the ordinary rather than to the extraordinary, a choice which is nontrivial and non-inevitable particularly in a climate of museum builders and wunderkammer builders who chose to collect around them the most particular and peculiar specimens possible.

Another key question about the system regards organization. Once one has decided which elements to include in one’s system, how does one organize them in a way that makes the system easy to use, understand and/or process? One potential way is through ordering. Both sets follow relatively the same order with flowers at the beginning and fruits at the end. This ends up being because all sets follow loosely the order in which the plants bloom. But de Passe yet again makes this clear and explicit through the use of text. He guides viewers through each season in the main portion of the text and numbers each entry clearly in both the main text and the
appendix. These are precautions that Le Moyne does not take. Again viewers are left to bring their experience to bear on deducing the ordering system of the set.

As we move between sets we see artists shift from using descriptive detail and arrangements based on calendric, pragmatic, natural orders\textsuperscript{37} to make vague allusions to order within the set and within the biological order of things to using more explicit cues, like uniform labeling and numbering, along with these implicit ones to guide viewers through the collections\textsuperscript{38, 39}. What always remains implicit by virtue of the types of system the artists have constructed is the relationship between plants. They are related experientially and visually by the act of seeing one after the other as one flips through the pages of the collections. The context of experience for one image comes from those around it and in this way they are by default related. But the nature of this experiential relationship is hard to pin down and highly subjective. There are moments where this connection is made more forced and explicit as with the choice to depict the French marigold and clove pinks on the same page (Figure 2.20). But in this instance the artist is forced to key in on specific parts of the plant perhaps to keep the comparison from growing too large. The connection and relationship between individuals is foregrounded and not spelled out, it is one which viewers must fill in by their own experiences of the artwork and in reality. Furthermore by constructing a system in this way it is just as easy to understand the plants and organize the system in terms of relationships and connections between plants as it is to flip through and understand what is distinct and different about them.

**Conclusion: Blurring Boundaries**

In creating visual systems, both artists have created art objects whose individual
constituents as well as the collections as a whole facilitate particular considerations of plant bodies. These artists' brand of system allows consideration of the individual but not outside the context of the whole, is not an inevitable one, nor is it a simple one. Such a system defies consolidation and allows inconsistency between works, which manifests as individual persona for particular plants. Le Moyne attempts in both of his watercolor sets to imagine a different kind of system, one that is consolidated. The attempt in the earlier watercolor set comes in the form of images of several different breeds of flower heads on one page (Figure 2.21), and the attempt in the later watercolor set comes in the opening and closing images. The opening image is several insects arranged in a grid on the page (Figure 2.22) and the last image in the collection is puzzlingly, a bowl of fruit (Figure 2.23). The fruits in the fruit bowl all lie awkwardly and unconvincingly against one another in fixed static positions. Their boundaries are rigidly outlined as if to suggest their harsh definition and independence from one another and Le Moyne seems to struggle in lighting them all so that their bodies are convincingly shaped and uniformly rounded. The complexity and ambiguity of relationship and the sharpness of identity of the individual gets lost in such a collection. The complexity and ambiguity, born of the serial nature of the collections, are I think the most interesting and compelling parts of the collections I have discussed here, in addition to the elements that most make these collections difficult to work with. Ultimately, in moving from the earlier to later sets Le Moyne turns away from the kind of system which places more weight on taxonomical difference toward one that reminds viewers of plants' ability to relate and asks them to find both differences and comparative points. The impulse to relate while simultaneously discretizing indicates
that the underlying medieval mindset is not entirely gone from these works. Furthermore, the affective qualities of these relationships, facilitated by an animacy invested representation means that the scientific natural phenomena concerned description, ultimately present in the works is simultaneously more scientific and more affectively invested. The works of Le Moyne and de Passe as well facilitate flux between worldviews and strategies that might easily seem discrepant. They walk and smear the line between the future of taxonomy and the past of similitude in an elegant and complex way that makes it hard but necessary to study these works and other such collections.

1 Daston and Galison, “The Image of Objectivity.” Daston and Galison study the development and change of scientific ideals and objectivity
4 Kemp, “Taking It on Trust: Form and Meaning in Naturalistic Representation.”
5 Arber, *Herbals*. The derivative nature of herbals is largely attributed by Arber to technology and copying and note also that realism happens at the beginning of the trajectory if not at the end
6 Olson, “Markers: Le Moyne de Morgues in 16th Century Florida.”
7 Ibid.
8 Arber, *Herbals*. The tie of abstracted images in herbals is a lesser point. Arber points out that the abstraction in herbals is largely a result of degenerative copying rather than any inherent bias in terms of how to understand plants themselves.
10 Ibid., 2–7.
11 Ibid., 10.
12 Hulton, *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*. Hulton provides an exhaustive biography of Le Moyne and the particulars of his expedition and the works which resulted from it.
13 Veldman, *Crispijn de Passe and His Progeny (1564-1670)*. Veldman provides a thorough biography, chronologies of production and classification of themes in works for de Passe I and family
14 Le Moyne de Morgues, *Portraits of Plants*. The 1575 collection is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection in London. See Portraits of Plants for Catalogue and descriptions
Stein, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), and British Museum, *French Drawings from the British Museum*. The 1585 Collection is currently held by the British Museum in London.

Ibid. Only three reasonably complete copies of this book survive. This work was based on my observation of the two copies held by the British Museum and British Library in London.

Griffiths, Gerard, and British Museum, *The Print in Stuart Britain, 1603-1689*. Several editions of Hortus Floridus survive. This work was based on my observation of the editions held by the British Library and British Museum in London.

Gerard, “Woutneel, de Passe and the Anglo-Netherlandish Print Trade.” Many authors including Hatton (1909), Wheelock (1999) and Brenninkmeyer-De Rooj (1996) have pointed to the similarities between de Passe’s work and Le Moyne’s Gerard (1996) Asserts that the connection specifically comes through Hans Woutneel having given the work of Le Moyne to de Passe.


Figure taken from: Hatton, *The Craftsman’s Plant-Book*, 491.

Chen, *Animacies*.


Savage, “The Hortus Floridus of Crispijn Vande Pas the Younger.” Some plants are present but they are not nearly as detailed and far less animated than the watercolor images and were also added at later stages of the prints.

Hulton, *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*. Hulton argues that the subtle change in shades of green of the three peaches in the bunch are meant to indicate ripening of the peaches.

Nickelsen, *Draughtsmen, Botanists and Nature*.


Hulton, *The Work of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues*. The 1585 watercolor is accompanied by a sonnet and *la clef des champs* opens with a sonnet and dedicatory letter, translations of which can be found in Hulton.

Coats, *Flowers and Their Histories*.

Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.


Savage, “The Hortus Floridus of Crispijn Vande Pas the Younger.”


Veldman, *Crispijn de Passe and His Progeny (1564-1670)*.

Savage, “The Hortus Floridus of Crispijn Vande Pas the Younger.”
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